THE
INTERPRETERS SERIES

MODERN GREEK STORIES

EDITED WITH FOREWORD BY
DEMETRA VAKA

DATE DUE

SEP. 15, 1920

Sep 15 1920

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TRANSLATED BY
DEMETRA (VAKA)
AND
ARISTIDES PHOUTRIDES

With a foreword by
DEMETRA VAKA

PROVIDENCE ATHENAEUM
Withdrawn From
THE COLLECTION
THE PROVIDENCE
ATHENÆUM

NEW YORK
DUFFIELD AND COMPANY
1920

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Printed in the United States of America

SEP 15 1920

To

Those American Men and Women who have bound themselves together in the society of *FRIENDS OF GREEK WOMEN* this volume is dedicated by the translators

NOTE

Of the writers whose stories have been selected for this volume of translations, Polylas, Bizyenos, and Papadiamantes are dead; all the others are living. Without exception, they have cultivated other forms of literary expression beside the short story. Most of them are leading figures in the literary world of Modern Greece. It is worthy of note that the writers of the "Sin of My Mother" and of "The Frightened Soul" come from Thrace, the original home of the cult of Dionysus and of the Drama, which after almost five hundred years of Turkish misrule is to return to Greece again. Chronologically, Polylas' "Forgiveness" is the oldest story in the collection; the most recent is "The Frightened Soul," which appeared in the pages of a Greek magazine in Constantinople, started after the occupation of the city by the Allies in 1918.

Demetra Vaka translated "The Sin of My Mother," "The God-Father" and "She That Was Homesick." The rest were translated by Dr. Aristides E. Phoutrides.

The translators wish to express their gratitude to Professors Socrates Kugeas and Andreas Andreades of the University of Athens for the generous assistance they rendered by providing most of the material from which the selections were made, and to Mr. Kenneth Brown for editing the whole book.

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MODERN GREEK STORIES

FOREWORD

It may fairly be said of modern Greece that she owes her independence to the enthusiasm and inspiration of her poets and other writers. When the Hellenic civilization of the middle ages fell under the yoke of an Asiatic conqueror, when Constantinople, the last hold of the Greek race, was taken by the Turks in 1453, the Greeks seemed to have come to an end. Indeed, for years they were so absolutely under the heel of the Turkish conqueror that the thought of ever freeing themselves must have seemed to them a dream beyond the possibility of realization, especially since at that time the whole of Europe was trembling before the all-conquering Moslem.

Yet, gradually, unknown Greek poets began to write, or rather to compose, songs of patriotism, which were repeated from mouth to mouth; and the youngsters were taught by their illiterate mothers the songs of these unknown bards, while look-outs were posted on the thresholds of the doors to guard against their being overheard. Thus, after the first hundred years of slavery the descendants of the Hellenes felt less hopelessly under the heel of their conqueror, and began to

walk less timorously, because along with them walked Hope, infused in them by their poets. It was the power and fervor of their poems which presently inspired some of the more adventurous young men to take to the mountains to form themselves into revolutionary bands, to drill, and to prepare their infinitesmal strength to revolt against the mightiest empire then in existence. Half brigands, and wholly patriotic, they drilled and exercised in their remote fastnesses, and instituted petty guerrilla warfare against the Turks, which must have seemed as preposterous, at first, as the attack of a mosquito on a rhinoceros.

To the western educated world, Mount Olympus is known as the abode of the gods of Ancient Greece. To the Greeks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Mount Olympus became the shrine whereon the fires of hope and patriotism were kept alive. And if in the days of Greece's glory, Mount Olympus had been inhabited by imaginary gods, the creations of Greek imagination, during the dark and bitter days of her slavery, the holy mountain became the abode of the forerunners of her rebirth.

To that mountain at first resorted a few—then more and more, until it became the one stronghold for freedom, the one independent state in the mighty Turkish Empire; and there those modern Greeks, mostly illiterate, though still intellectual, led a life totally apart from the Turks, with the games of the ancient Greeks, to keep

their bodies fit, and with their historical traditions to keep their minds fit. There, those who had education, initiated the others into the past grandeur of their race; and those who could create, composed the great ballads of patriotism wrought with hope, which are among the proudest achievements of the Hellenic race.

These modern Greeks had their leaders, their teachers, and above all, their bards. And up there, in the air of that free and holy mountain, inspired by its grandeur, they created their songs and set them to music. Then youths, disguised as beggars, went down from Mount Olympus and trudged from place to place, singing their songs to their fellow-countrymen, making recruits, and preparing the people for the revolution to come. Thus, through the power of poetry, hope was kept alive in the breasts of the much-tried race.

Gradually the eyes of the whole of enslaved Greece looked toward Mount Olympus with worship and exaltation; and presently even the Turks began to respect the mountain, since the detachments of soldiers they sent against it were constantly defeated on its precipitous slopes. After a while they ceased the thankless task, and left it alone.

During this time the women of Greece played their part well, since to them was entrusted the work of instilling in the minds of the little children the songs that came down from the twice sacred mountain. Among those who were brought up under the inspiration of

this *laïc* poetry was Rigas Phereos, the greatest of all the poets of enslaved Greece. Rigas was born in 1752, in Thessaly, where the cruelty of the Turks was at its worst. He must have been an exceptional child, as later he became an exceptional and extraordinary man; for at the age of seventeen he had finished his studies at home and abroad, and, imbued by his mother with the inspiration of the idea of independence, he at first went to Mount Athos, the mountain whereon are the Greek monasteries. When, from the highest summit, Rigas looked down upon the lands of ancient Greece—kept in ignorance and squalor by a cruel conqueror—he wept. Then, wiping away his tears, he cried aloud:

"This is no time for tears, but time for action."

He left the monasteries, and set out for Mount Olympus. His fame as a poet had preceded him, and he received a great ovation. Among the leaders were members of his own family, who made much of the young bard with his foreign education. He remained with the outlaws, learning what they had to teach, and drilling with them. One day, when each bard had sung his fiery song, one of them turned to Rigas, and asked him to improvise. Inspired by his surroundings, Rigas, on the spur of the moment, created what was to become one of the trumpet songs of his struggling race. He apostraphised the leaders thus:

"How long, oh, my brave ones, shall we live in narrow confines, alone, like lions on the slopes of the mountain?

How long shall we inhabit caves, our only outlook the tops of the trees beneath us? How long shall we have to abandon the world in order to be free? For how long shall we leave behind our Fatherland, our brothers and parents, our friends, our offspring, and our relatives? Better one hour's freedom than forty years' slavery and prison!"

Then, making an appeal to all the men present, he cried:

"Your mother-country is calling you. She needs you and longs for you, and with a mother's anguish is asking for your help."

The poem is lengthy and fiery, and in the midst of it once more he turns to the leaders, and, referring to the dissensions among the various factions—that curse of Greece at all times—he cried:

"Come at this chosen hour, and let us take oath upon the cross to choose wise and patriotic counsellors. We must have law and order amongst ourselves, and for our Motherland's sake, we must appoint but one chief."

And that seventeen-year-old boy went on to say these remarkable words:

"For anarchy is another form of slavery, and if we live like wild beasts, we shall be consumed in vain."

The poem grows more religious, and at the end comes the oath: "Oh, King of the Universe, to Thee I swear never to submit to the will of the tyrant; never to work for him, nor to be deceived by him; and not to be seduced

by his promises and bribes. So long as I live on this earth my one aim shall be his destruction. Faithful to my Motherland I must break his yoke, and always fight by the side and under the orders of my leader. And if I do not keep the oath, let the lightning from heaven fall and turn me to ashes!"

All on the mountain took the oath, and Rigas, kissing the leader, went away, and journeyed from place to place, trumpeting his song. I believe that every Greek child was taught the oath, as soon as it could understand and memorize it.

In Constantinople Rigas asked an audience of the great Greek, Ypsilanthy, and when he was in his presence, he spoke of the oath. He must have been a very convincing person, this young Rigas, for Ypsilanthy took him for his secretary, and the two worked together to spread the movement in the very heart of the Turkish capital. After a while he left Constantinople and went from place to place, working with pen and word for the revolt against Turkey. So great was his power that rich Greeks everywhere gave him their fortunes for the cause, and followed him themselves.

In Valachia and Moldavia (present Roumania), then rich Greek centres, Rigas formed the "National Organization," which became later the sustaining heart of the revolution. From there he went to Austria, where many rich Greek merchants dwelt, and while in Vienna he had his work printed for the first time. From there

he wrote to Napoleon, the all-powerful Buonaparte, then in Venice, and asked for his military aid. Eloquently he pictured what an achievement it would be to free Greece from the Turk. With his letter he sent a cigarette case made from the wood of a laurel tree which had grown close to the temple of Apollo.

Napoleon was pleased, both with the gift and the letter, and invited young Rigas to go to see him in Venice. On his way, his books and his correspondence fell into the hands of the Austrian government. The immediate arrest and trial of Rigas and his adherents followed. That was in 1797. As far back as that, Austria was scheming to conquer the Balkans, establish herself in Salonica, and from there prepare for the capture of Constantinople. The rebirth of Greece, the real claimant to the Ottoman Empire, was not at all to the liking of Austria, and naturally a man like Rigas was looked upon as a destructive and pernicious influence against Austria's imperialistic designs.

The trial of Rigas stirred the Greeks all over the world, and the defence he made was magnificent. "All these poems, all these writings are mine," he acknowledged. "I produced them for the sake of my race, and since I could not print them where barbarous tyrants live, I came here to this enlightened, Christian nation to publish them. And that I might not involve the Austrian government in any way, I had the printing done secretly, in the dead of night. I cannot dream

that your Emperor will stand against the freeing of a formerly glorious race which today lies under the heel of a barbarous conqueror."

In spite of this defence, Austria found Rigas guilty, and he and his companions were surrendered to the Turk.

The European press protested; the rich Greeks all over the world offered fabulous sums for his freedom; but the chancelleries of Europe remained mute. In 1797 men like Rigas were looked upon with disfavor by the governing classes, because each great nation had alien subject races of its own, and there was no telling where the spirit of freedom might break out next.

From Trieste the condemned Greeks were taken captive to Turkey, and while passing through Belgrade, their guards, hearing that Greek bands were going to attempt their rescue, decided to put them to death.

"You may kill me!" Rigas cried, as the guards were about to behead him, "I have sown: others will reap."

He was killed in 1798, on the 29th of May, which happened to be the anniversary of the fall of Constantinople, and in that year in which Rigas died, another great Greek poet was born, Solomos, who was some day to write:

"Take Greece to your heart, and you will feel grandeur quivering in you."

While in his teens, Solomos took up the work of Rigas, and one of his great poems not only was the

inspiration of the revolution, but is today the national hymn of free Greece. Solomos was the most fortunate of his country's poets, since during his life the struggle for freedom came. The revolution started in 1821, and ended in 1829, and during those years deeds were performed which not only equal those of ancient Greece, but often surpass them. In those nine years the blood of the best was shed, their capital was spent, their buildings were destroyed. The land was as devastated as part of France is today, and long years of toil were required to restore its fertility.

But all that was nothing compared with the wrong perpetrated upon the Greek people by the so-called great Christian Powers. Self appointed arbiters, they decided—after the Greeks had fought with the most heroic desperation for eight long years—that more than two-thirds of the land in revolt should be returned to the kind ministration of the Turk—as again today they are considering retaining him in Constantinople.

What was permitted to become free Greece in 1830 was hardly a nation. It consisted of less than three quarters of a million people, and a tract of land of less than fifty thousand square miles. Greece was freed, —but the fertile Greek lands, the commercial centres, the ports, the industries, the granaries, the rich islands, all were returned to the Turk, and millions and millions of Greeks were forced to remain under the Asiatic yoke, because those great Christian powers themselves wanted

ultimately to possess the heritage of Greece. They wronged the Greek people in 1830—they have ever considered the rights of little nations as subservient to their own interests, and for this policy France and England have paid from 1914 to 1919 with the best of their blood, while Austria and Russia, the greater culprits, have seen their own dissolution the price they have had to pay for their cruel selfishness. Had Europe been merely just to the Greek people, and to the other small, struggling nations, many of the subsequent wars would have been avoided, with their following unjust peace arrangements; and the great world war itself would have been impossible, because, although it is true that Germany started the war in 1914, that war had been prepared by all the great powers, by the treaty of Berlin in 1878.

Greece was free, but there was nothing in it with which to start life—nothing, except that pile of ruins on the Acropolis for which men had given their blood, and to which all through the ages every enlightened soul had turned for inspiration. Yes, such as she was, there was a free Greece, and after four centuries of slavery, the Acropolis was Greek once more, and three-quarters of a million Greeks were able to breathe freely, and openly to study their own history. True, most of the great leaders had been killed; others were maimed and useless; while the rest bowed their heads with the black despair born from injustice.

No gold was sent in from sympathetic nations to rebuild Greece. There were no funds raised for her orphans—no Red Cross appropriations, no Y. M. C. A. help—nothing at all. And there are people who dare to say that the world has not advanced.

In 1830 there was no conscience in Europe, and Greece was left to stand solitary in her own destitution free, and dazed—dazed not only at her freedom after centuries of slavery, but dazed at her own confines. Hers was the fate to keep her eyes lowered, if they were to be kept in her own frontiers. If she lifted them ever so slightly, she saw her own lands in slavery, her enslaved children stretching their hands toward her, imploring her to break their chains and make them free. Is it a wonder, then, that small, weak, and dazed, she has still been forced to fight, and fight, and always to fight, ever since 1821?

Yet, along with the fighting, schools began to be built everywhere, and the people once more could openly take their children to Greek schools on free Greek soil. The illiteracy, which was appalling, began to disappear, and once more the Greeks could read and write, and those who lived in other countries and were rich, sent money back, and so Greece, instead of dying—as some of the great powers hoped she would—was actually beginning to prosper.

Although they had nothing to start their housekeeping with they had the Acropolis to guide and sustain

them. They had the Past, and that past lighted the way to the Future.

Unfortunately for Greece, a king was selected by Europe to govern her, a king who was a Bavarian, a kindly soul, but a foreigner who brought with him his foreign queen. Neither understood the Greek language, nor the Greeks, who, though illiterate, were steeped in glorious traditions. And along with Otto of Bavaria and his German queen, came the Bavarians, who occupied the big positions in Greece, and in the wake of the king and his consort came the representatives of the powers with secretaries and clerks.

They were different, those first free Greeks, from the Europeans who came either to rule them or to influence their political affiliations. They felt the difference that existed between them and their guests, and, being proud and sensitive, they suffered acutely. Just let the imagination dwell a little on what took place: on the one side the foreigner, supercilious, critical, bent on playing his political game; on the other the Greek, uneducated, crude, conscious of his past grandeur, conscious of his mentality, conscious of his gifts, and, above all, conscious of the littleness of his present.

It is not possible in a preface to enter upon the long anguish of the first three-quarters of a million. Suffice it to say that they did not like to be thought uncivilized by the court and the diplomatic circle. With the unrestrained abilities of precocious children, they threw

themselves into the process of becoming Europeanized. Foreign governesses swarmed, and the children of the Hellenes began to be brought up no longer by the trumpet-songs of Mount Olympus but by creations of alien minds and alien aspirations. Gradually a royalist class grew up around the court and in the big cities, which was truly a slave class. When they were slaves, the Hellenes had been free, since they adhered passionately to their language and to their national traditions. Free, under a foreign king, they became slaves to foreign influences. The upper classes now neglected their own traditions. They spoke French and English and German, and knew the literature of those countries better than their own. It was a phase through which they had to go. Alas! it has lasted too long.

Yet, while the better classes were eagerly Europeanizing themselves, the native life was growing stronger and healthier. Schools multiplied everywhere, and perhaps there is no country in the world which has so many newspapers and so many newspaper readers. Athens has 250,000 inhabitants, and 250 publications a week. Peasants will walk miles, or flag the trains, to obtain their newspapers. The quality of the editorials is excellent. And so esteemed is a writer in Greece that he expects little pecuniary gain. The fact that he cannot hope to make a living from literature has never prevented the Greek from writing, and thus modern Greece has always had an abundance of both poets and

prose writers. This little volume gives a good average of modern Greek short stories. If no woman's name appears it is not that the women of Greece are not writing, but that we have had to choose from what was at hand. Indeed, some of the best work has come from the pens of women, such as Madame Parren, editor and publisher of the *Ephemeris ton Kyrion*, in Athens, and whose novel, "The Emancipated," in spite of its shortcomings, is one of the best, if not the very best of modern Greek novels. Another woman, Mlle. Zographo, publisher and editor of the *Helleniki Epitheorisis*, has also written some very able and graphic short stories and plays. And readers of the *Atlantic Monthly* are familiar with the charm of style and beauty of narrative of Mme. Julia Dragoumis.

The Hellenic race has ever been intellectual, and to express itself is one of its greatest necessities. Thus, in spite of the fact that Greece has most of the time been at war, for the sake of her enslaved children, in spite of the fact that writing does not pay in Greece, men and women wrote, depicting life around them, and the life of the sea. Many of them also devoted themselves to translating the masterpieces of Europe, for the education of those of their race who could not read the originals. Shakespeare had several translators, and the Greeks enjoy him on the stage immensely, because he resembles their own classics.

Although Greece has been free less than a hundred

years, and during that time has had to eradicate the illiteracy forced on them by the Turk, and to scratch hard for a living, the literary genius of the people developed steadily. She had her serious writers and her comic writers, and, above all, her satirists. The leader of the last was Kokkos, who, like Aristophanes, ridiculed on the stage the weaknesses of his fellow-countrymen, especially their passion for aping the Europeans. His plays were in the form of musical comedies, and one of them, "Maroula," became so popular that amateur companies played it all over free and enslaved Greece. Half a dozen companies gave it in Constantinople and its suburbs alone, and gave it well, too.

For his satire, Kokkos paid with his life. A soldier shot and killed him as he was coming out of a theatre where one of his comedies had been satirizing the army.

Athens has also the unique distinction of having possessed for nearly half a century a satirical publication written entirely in verse. Its name was *Romeos*, an appellation like "Yankee." It announced that it would be published once a week, on whatever day it pleased to appear, and that it would accept as subscribers only those whom it liked. This was more than a mere form, and it refused to deliver *Romeos* to many public men, whom it did not like, and even to the Palace itself; and these disliked ones were obliged to buy it in the street, since everyone read it.

It was written in the vernacular, and always con-

tained the dialogue between two characters, Fasoulis and Pericletos, predecessors of Mr. Dooley and Mr. Hennesey. The satirical little sheet became the delight and dread of modern Greece; for *Romeos* spared no one. His satire was clean-cut and to the point, and the Danish dynasty, which replaced the Bavarian in 1863, came in for its share of ridicule. In 1897, during that unfortunate war against the Turk when Constantine, then Crown Prince, led his armies always to retreat, *Romeos* depicted him, in one of its crude lampoons, as standing in the midst of his women folk, being adorned for the fray. And a little verse underneath began:

"They dressed him, they combed him, they made him look brave," and ended up bitingly that when he saw the firing, he scooted for mother and home.

Many a time the office of *Romeos* was wrecked, either by enraged army officers, or by susceptible politicians; but Souris, owner, creator, and typesetter of *Romeos*, indomitably put his house in order, and reappeared with his weekly.

He made light of all his country's misfortunes, as if realizing that the burden was too great for the little race, and that to keep up its courage it needed humor. He has just died, when it looks as if Greece at last had a chance of gathering under her flag the major part of the lands inhabited by her children. Then Souris will not be needed to lighten the sorrow of his countrymen with his dry wit. Let us hope that the intrigues of

the big nations will not foster new injustices to the small, and that Greece, no longer harassed by wars, and by the lack of everything that feeds a nation, united at last, free to develop her gifts and to follow her great traditions, will rise once more and, to use Mr. Venizelos's words, will surprise those who look on her today with mistrust and suspicion.

At any rate, such as Greece is, she has given to the world Mr. Venizelos in her political life, and has produced Mr. Karkavitsas in her literature. A nation that can do this must be a nation with a future.

SEA

By A. Karkavitsas

SEA

My FATHER—may the wave that buried him be holy oil for him—never meant to make a sailor of me.

"Keep away, my boy," he said, "keep away from the lying monster! She has no faith nor mercy. Worship her as you will—honor her—she never moves from her own aim. Don't look at her deceiving smile, promising her countless wealth. Sooner or later she will dig a grave for you, or she will cast you on the world a useless ruin, with nothing to own but your skin and bones. Sea or woman—it's all the same!"

These were the words of a man who had spent a whole life on a ship's deck, a man whose father and grandfather and great-grandfather had died by the mast. And he was not alone of this opinion. The other old men of the island, veterans of the ships, and the younger people whose hands were still callous, whenever they took their seats in the coffee-house to smoke their water pipes, would waggle their heads sadly and say with a sigh:

"There's no more bread to be gained from the sea. Let me have just a root of vine on the solid earth and I would throw a black stone behind me."

The truth was that many of them had money enough to own not only a vine but a whole island. Yet they would spend it all on the sea. They competed against each other to see who could build the biggest vessel or who would be a captain first. I, who often heard their words and saw their acts, contrary and inconsistent with their words, could not understand the mystery.

Some God's breath, I said to myself, some power sent from infinity was coming down to drag with it all those souls and hurl them captives against their wills into the open sea, just as the raging north wind beating on the bare cliffs bites off the weathered pieces and hurls them down in a mass of fragments.

But the same impulse was pushing me, too, that way. Ever since my childhood days, I loved the sea. You might say I took my first steps in the water. My first play was a box of beans with a little stick set up in the center for a mast, with two pieces of thread for hawsers and a sheet of paper for a sail, and my imagination made of this little box a triple-decked bark. I put it to sea with emotion, and imagined myself in it. Of course, as soon as I took my hand off, my bark sank to the bottom, but I was not slow in building another of timber. My dockyard was at the little harbor of St. Nicholas. I put my boat to sea and I followed it, swimming to the entrance of the harbor, where the current swept it far away from me. Later I became first

in rowing and first in swimming. All I lacked was a fish's scales.

"Bravo!" said the old sailors to me with their good-natured smiles as they saw me ripping the water like a dolphin. "You will put us all to shame!"

I was proud because of these words and I hoped that some day I would fulfill their prophesy. I remember it was my seventh year at school when I closed my books forever. I found nothing in them that would respond to my longings, while everything else about me, living or not, whispered to me a thousand tales: The sailors with their faces bronzed by the sun; the old men with their reminiscences; the piled timber with its story told at sight; the lasses with their songs:

"How handsome is my little mate when wet with the sea-spray,
Puts on his change of snow-white clothes and takes the helm in hand."

This song I heard ever since my cradle days and it seemed to me like a hymn sung by my island to lure its inhabitants to the life of the sea. My dream, too, was some day to be a mate and, wet with the sea spray, to hold the helm in hand. Surely I would be handsome then and strong—a real man. I would be the pride of my island and I would be loved by every lass.

Yes, I did love the sea! At times I saw her spreading

from the headland far away and mingling with the blue firmament, like a sapphire floor, smooth, calm and silent with a secret that I longed to know. At times I saw her mad, spattering the shore angrily with white foam, toppling over the reefs, scaling the caves of the great rocks with a restless thundering roar as if she sought to penetrate the earth's fiery womb and to extinguish the flames that burned there. This intoxicated me, and I ran to play with her, to make her angry and provoke her, so that she might rush against me and chase me, and lash my body with her spray—tease her as we like to tease wild beasts bound with chains. Then, when I saw a ship lifting anchor and sailing out of the harbor into the open sea, and heard the cheering chanties of the sailors laboring at the capstan sheets and the farewells of the women, my soul would fly like a lonely bird after it. The sails of dark gray, swelling with the wind, the stays stretching like delicate lines against the horizon, the golden trucks leaving behind them a trail of light in the blue sky called out to me to go with them, promising new lands, new men, riches, joys, strange kisses that, though I knew it not, were stored in my heart as the inherited pleasures of my fathers. So, day and night, my soul longed for nothing else but the day of sailing away. Even when the news of a shipwreck reached the island, and the death of the drowned men lay heavy on everybody's heart, and silent grief spread from the frowning faces to the inanimate pebbles of the beach,

even when I met the orphans of the dead in the streets, like gilded pieces of wood among the ruins of a once prosperous home, and saw the women clothed in black, and the bereaved sweethearts left disconsolate, and heard the survivors of the shipwreck tell of their misfortune, even then I was sorry and jealous that I had not been with them to see my own sweetheart in her wild majesty and to wrestle with her, wrestle unto death.

At last I could no longer control myself. My father had sailed away with his schooner. My uncle, Kalligeres, was just about to set sail for the Black Sea. I fell on his neck; and my mother, too, fearing I might get sick, intervened in my behalf. He consented to take me along.

"I will take you," he said, "but you'll have to work. A sailing ship needs care, it's no fishing boat for food and sleep."

I was always afraid of my uncle. He was as rude and mean to me as he was to his sailors. Men avoided working under him.

"Better slaving in Algiers
Than with Captain Kalligeres."

they would say to show his heartlessness. He would "bake a fish on their lips" not only in the work he exacted but even in the food and the pay he gave them. Whatever there was of old salt junk, mouldy dry cod,

bitter flour, weevilly biscuit and chalky cheese could be found in Kalligeres' stores to be used for his sailors. He would never speak, except to command, to swear, or to abuse somebody. Only men who despaired of any other chance would offer to be hired by him. So I knew well I was not going to indulge in caresses and good times. But the lure of the sea made me disregard everything.

"Only take me aboard," I said, "and I'll work as much as you want."

To make my word good, I plunged into work. I made the futtock-shrouds my play. The higher I had to go the more eager I was to climb up first. Perhaps my uncle wished to make it especially hard for me from the beginning and to acquaint me with the endless trials of a sailor's life in order to make me change my mind. He surely kept me going, from deck-washing to deck-scrubbing, from sail-mending to rope-twisting, from letting go and clewing up the sails to stowing them; from the quay to the capstan, from loading to unloading, from calking to painting. I had to be first in everything. First be it! What did I care? I was satisfied to climb high to the topyard and with my big toes grasping the backstay to look down into space and watch the sea open a way and retreat before me as my humble subject. Drunk with joy I compared myself to a proud bird winging its way triumphantly across the skies. I was in a magic trance. I looked with pity on the rest of the

world, on the men who lived on dry land. They seemed to me like ants, creeping snakes, or slow-moving tortoises cursed to wear their shells forever as a useless burden.

"Bah!" I would say with contempt. "They think they live!" On such a surge of enthusiasm I heard one day the Captain's voice roar like a peal of thunder beside me:

"Let go the sails! Clew up and let go all!"

I was frightened and ran to follow the other sailors without understanding exactly what the trouble was. Everyone to his post, and I to mine. They flew to the jibs; I followed them. They climbed up to the yards. I was among them, making fast and stowing every sail. Within five minutes the bark was a skeleton of spars. In front of his cabin the captain stood shouting and abusing and cursing. I looked at him but d——d if I knew what he was talking about.

"What in h——l is the matter?" I asked the man next to me as we were making the sky-sail fast.

"The squall—don't you see? The water-spout!"

The water-spout! A shiver ran down my back. I had often heard of its awful wonders; how it sweeps everything away on its path, how it makes tatters of sails, breaks down masts, and downs all sea-sailing things. There was not only one but three or four. Two of them rose towards Batum. The others were on our port bow sweeping over the waters from gray distance

where sky and sea met. Ahead Caucasus, a frowning monstrous mass, showing his darkened coast walled with great cliffs like bare teeth ready to tear a world. Above us the sky draped with thick heavy curtains of clouds; below, the sea, blackish-gray, trembling from end to end like a living thing shuddering with fear. For the first time I saw my sweetheart frightened.

The one water-spout was high and arched like an elephant's proboscis, and hung over the waters, a black motionless monster. The other, at first like an immense thick pillar rising straight up, was suddenly broken in two like a column of smoke; its lower half was shattered into a thousand fragments while the upper half hung from the clouds like a many-forked serpent's tongue. I saw the serpent moving on, stretching his neck, now this way and now that, brandishing his tongues as if seeking something on the face of the waters, and then suddenly flinging his body backward and gathering it in coils to nestle among the clouds. But a third one, black and gray and as thick as the trunk of a plane-tree one thousand years old, stood motionless for some time sucking up the water and swelling in size; and then tottering like a menacing beast, it started sweeping against us, a monstrous mass of terror.

"Down there! Get down!" I heard a voice from the deck calling me.

Turning around, I saw that all the others had climbed down while I had been clinging fast to the topmast,

watching the strange miracle. I glided down the shrouds quickly and landed beside the captain. I saw him face the fearful monster with a savage frown and deep watchful eyes as if he were to bind it with an evil eye spell. In his right hand he held a knife with a black handle and stood in front of the mizzen-mast as if he had chosen it for a target. Near him the mate was filling up the rusty horn by throwing into its empty belly a powder of all kinds of old nails and pieces of lead. Round about, the rest of the crew stood with arms crossed, speaking no word, looking now at the sky and now at the sea with the indifference of fatalists.

Meanwhile the water serpent was advancing with winged feet and with swelled breast, sucking up the water like a thirsty Tantalus and casting it up as a smoky cloud of storm into the sky. At moments you might think it would sweep the whole deck clean of every spar or snatch up the whole bark, hull and all, and hurl it skyward. It must have been just about two yards from us. Never faltering, it rose before us a shining rounded mass of gold and green like a smoked crystal, and, deep in its trunk, a roughly hammered piston of black and gray, the water hissed upward eager to flood whole worlds through the great sky.

"Strike!" commanded the captain.

The mate, with a quick movement, emptied his horn against it. Old nails, pieces of lead and hemp, all were lost in its side. It seemed to tremble from top to toe.

Some doubt had entered its heart, or some cold fear had chilled its wind and it stopped. It made an effort to move again but it tottered, whirled about twice and stood again motionless, a tower of glass uniting sea and sky.

"Missed it!" said the captain bitterly.

"Missed it!—I see that," said the mate; "Just draw the pentalpha, captain, and let the sin be on my neck."

"My God," whispered the captain with resolution, "I am a sinner." He made the sign of the cross and, drawing with the knife a pentalpha on the mast, he pronounced the spell three times with a low voice:

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word." He fixed it in the midst of the sacred symbol with the fury of a man who was striking at the heart of a wild beast.

Something like thunder was heard, as if a gun was discharged on our broadside, and a monstrous wave rolled down our deck. At the same time lightning flashed from the Caucasus, and the mountain roared with loud rumbling. The squall burst now, and the sea, stirred with fright, foamed and raged over the whole main from end to end. A wild tempest, truly!

"Aloft the sails!" commanded the captain quickly. "Top-sails! Jibs! Top-gallants! Royals!"

We spread our sails and soon the bark was on its course again.

II

Three weeks later we anchored at Constantinople with a cargo on board. There I received the first letter from my mother, a first letter that came like a first stab at my inexperienced heart.

"Yanne, my boy," said the old woman, "when you come back to the island with St. Nicholas' help and my blessing, you will not be any longer a captain's son as you were on the day you sailed away—your father is gone with his schooner and all our fortune! The Black Sea has swallowed them all. Now you have nothing left but this one-story house, me, a helpless woman, and God. May your arms be strong. Work, my boy, and respect your uncle. If you have anything left over from your earnings, send it to me to buy oil and burn a candle before the Saint for your father's soul,"

I crossed my hands and looked with tearful eyes at the sea. The words of the letter seemed to me like an echo of my father's words. He was a captain, owner of his own vessel for many years, and now his widow had to depend on my savings to make a wheat offering* for

* κόλυβα, boiled wheat seasoned with sugar, cinnamon, burned flour, nuts, etc., and placed on a tray before the altar. The priest prays for the forgiveness of the dead person's sins and the wheat is distributed among all present, who take it saying, "God forgive him," and eat it.

the dead man's soul! His wheat offering, not to speak of the poor widow's own needs! Meanwhile, who knows against what reefs his iron strong arms are dashing, what gulls are tearing his flesh, or what waves are bleaching his fleshless bones!

How significant were his last words! We had met for the last time just as we were sailing into the port of Theodosia when he saw me high on the top-yard stowing the skysail. He crossed himself and stood dumb with emotion. He had not expected such a thing.

"Why do you look at him, Captain Angele?" Kaligeres shouted to him as we sailed by. "I won't exchange him for your best hand."

At the same moment I was praying earnestly that the sea might open and swallow me. I could not rest as long as I felt his stern eyes fixed on me. I ran hurriedly from one end to another, as if I was too busy to stop. So down into the forecastle I would go, and up the futtock-shrouds; or I would pass from the capstan to the pump and do anything to avoid him. He understood my confusion and did not rise from his seat; but from the place where he sat he followed me with a sad, complaining eye as if he was looking on a deathbed.

Next day he met me as I was going to town with the other men. As soon as I caught sight of him, I tried to hide, but he nodded and even from the distance his

nod was so commanding that my legs refused to obey my will.

"My boy, whatever was the matter with you? Have you thought over what you are trying to do?"

For the first time I knew there was gentleness in my father's voice; but I did not hesitate.

"Father," I said with courage, "I did think it over. Maybe my act is foolish and bad; but I can't help it. I can't live otherwise. The sea calls me; don't try to cross me. Else I might go where you will never see me again."

He made the sign of the cross, puzzled by my determination. He looked straight into my eyes for some time, then he shook his head and said:

"Very well, my boy; do whatever God prompts you to. I have done my part. Remember, I have spared neither words nor money. You will have no reason to curse me in the future. Go with my blessing."

His last blessing was my first regret. The sea did reward my love on my first trip.

I was now truly a hired man for Captain Kaligeres, to earn my bread and my mother's, who had been a captain's wife. Yet in spite of her advice, I could neither respect him nor work for my uncle any longer. If I must be a hired sailor, I thought, thank God there are other vessels. I would much rather get a hail of abuse from a stranger than from my own kin. A stranger would be more likely to respect my name. And

so I made up my mind, if all was well, to disembark at the first port.

"Out for a better job? You will see!" said Kilageres, who guessed my thoughts.

One day I went to ask a little olive oil for the meal.

"No," he said, "that's for the man who stands by the wheel."

I went a second time and a third. The same answer. It wasn't enough for him to feed us with every decaying thing; he had to strike even olive oil off our rations. His avarice and his heartlessness were his most detestable traits. I decided to get back at him once, and one day when I was at the wheel and he was out of sight, I took the picture of St. Nicholas from the chart-house, where a candle filled with olive oil burned before it, tied it on the wheel and left the deck. The bark, like a crazy person, wandered all over the sea.

"Yanne!" shouted the captain, "who is at the wheel?"

"He who eats the oil!" I answered.

All the crew split themselves laughing and that angered him.

"Get out!" he said. "Pack your things and go!"

"All right. Give me my pay."

He took me into the chart-house and opened his account book. He reckoned up my dues in his usual manner.

"I hired you on such a day. The next day you came

aboard; the day after you brought in your clothes and one day later you started work. Not so?''

He cheated me altogether out of five days' pay. Still it might have been worse.

''Just as you say,'' I said.

And so, with two pounds in my pocket, I landed in Messena

III

From now on I lived like a real sailor. A life of toil and turmoil. Ant-like as far as being always busy, but never ant-like in saving. How could you ever save with such work from hand to mouth? One pair of shoes took one month's wages. A waterproof, another month's pay. One good time on shore, a third month. One month out of a job, six months in debt. How could you save and support a home? My home did not last long. Merciful death sealed its door. Within a year my mother died and her care was taken off my shoulders.

Wandering from ship to ship, from captain to captain, and from trip to trip, I wasted ten years on the sea. It was a troubled life; one pleasure, three misadventures. Before you could say ''praise God,'' you had to yell ''God help us!'' Day and night my father's words resounded in my ears. What was the use? You might knock your fist against a knife or your head against a mast; the mast can't break. If I had a root

of grapevine on land I might throw a black stone behind me and leave the sea forever. But where was the vine? I had one of two fortunes coming to me; either some wave would bury me or I might turn into the world a beggar. Very well, then. A blessed life had to be mine. I might stick to the job and have a good time. I wasn't alone—was I? Every sailor in the world has the same bad luck. I was a hired hand on many vessels and worked with many foreigners, too, but never did I envy anyone. A sailor's life is the same everywhere; abuse from the captain, contempt from the charterer, threats from the sea, kicks from the land. Wherever he turns, he faces an enemy.

Once, when I had come to Piraeus on an English brig I thought of going to my island which I had never seen since the day I had sailed away with Captain Kalligeres. Fate had taken me on her wings and made me spin about the earth like a top. On my return I found my home a ruin, my mother's grave overgrown with weeds and my young sweetheart a grown-up girl. I had the priest read prayers for my mother, I burned a taper for my father's soul, and cast two glances on my sweetheart. I shivered all over.

"Who knows?" I thought bitterly. "If I had listened to my father's words might I not now be Mary's husband?"

Her father, Captain Parares, was an ancient shipowner, of the same age as my father. He was lucky

with the sea. He struck it at the proper time and so he reaped a rich harvest from it. Then he sold his bark, *St. Stephanos,* bought some dry fields, turned them into a garden, and dropped his travels forever.

I did not leave on the next day as my plan was. Nor the day after. A week went by and I was still there. Something held me back, though I had nothing more to do. Only the same thought came again and again to my mind, putting out, like a light extinguisher, all other thoughts.

"If I had listened to my father's words, might I not now be Mary's husband?"

At the same time I kept passing and repassing her home, and towards evening I would take the road to the village—well, just to catch a glimpse of her. In other words, I was in love with Mary. Whenever she passed with lowered eyes and light step before me and I saw her full breast and her hair hanging in black waves down her back, I felt a desire to run to her and lock her in my arms with unfailing passion. Her black, almond-shaped eyes seemed to promise to me a calm, happy and restful nest, and her bosom looked like a harbor of tranquil waters and smooth sands where a mariner might, without any fear, moor his boat.

It was like the vision that always haunts me. Waves, sky, earth and its crops, men, life itself always transitory and changing, tire our souls. As a balance of necessity, nature must seek stability; and our mind

looks for a place where it can rest by day and by night while the body goes on with its endless trials and struggles. So a woman is found and a marriage is sought. Do you think it of small importance while you wander over the world to know that there is a little corner for you somewhere, where love burns for you expecting your return anxiously? The same magnet that once had lured me, inexperienced lad, to the sea, was now drawing me, a full-grown man, towards the woman—only with much greater force. With the same blind passion, I followed the footprints of my fair one. I first sent Captain Kalligeres as messenger of my love. Then Kalomoira, "the Good Fortune," an old woman famous throughout the island as a matchmaker.

"I will not go," I thought, "until I have an answer."

But my messenger brought everything to a happy end. There was honey in her words and she won both the girl and her father.

"I want to speak to you," said Captain Parares to me one evening, after taking me apart. "Your purpose is good and your way is honest. There is nobody I would like to have in my house better than the son of a friend who was like a brother to me. Mary will be yours. But on one condition: You will have to give up the sea. I stand by your father's words. The sea has no faith nor mercy. You must give it up."

"But what am I to do?" I asked. "How can I live? You know I have learned no other trade."

"I know it. But Mary has a fortune of her own."

It came like a slap to me and I turned all red.

"Then am I to take a wife to support me?"

"No, she will not support you. Don't be angry. I did not mean to offend you. You will work together. There is the orchard, the vineyard, the field. They need workers."

The truth was, I needed nothing better. I was ready to give up the sea forever. I felt like St. Elias, who shouldered his oar and took to the mountains, looking for a place to live where men had never heard of his name. He didn't care either to look on the sea or to hear of it any longer. I felt exactly the same. Her name, her color, her charms had no more secrets for me. The spell had been broken.

"Agreed!" I said, "you have my word for it."

IV

Three years went by, spent with Mary up in Trapi, my father-in-law's village. Three years of real life. I learned how to handle a pick and worked with my wife in the orchard, the vineyard and the field. With work and love, I never felt the passing of time. When we did not dig together we chased each other under the citron trees like birds just learning how to fly. Her word followed on my word; her kiss on mine. I learned how to dig around the citron trees, how to prune the

vines, and how to plough the field. Then I knew how to pick the citrons in the fall, how to gather the grapes when vintage time came in August, and how to reap the wheat-field in the month of harvest. I earned fifty dollars from my citrons yearly, twenty from my vine, and forty from my wheat, besides the seed I kept for next year's crop and the provisions for my own home use. It was the first time that I really knew what earning was, and realized that my labor was received gratefully and rewarded with plenty. The speechless earth tried in a thousand manners, colors, shapes, fragrances, fruits and flowers to speak and thank me for my taking care of it.

If I ploughed, the furrow remained faithfully where I opened it. It would receive the seed and hide it diligently from the flying things; then it would keep it warm and damp until the day when it would show it before my eyes fresh with dew, green with living sap, and finally mature with gold. The earth seemed to say: "See how I have brought it up!" If I lightened the burden of a vine by pruning it, the vine would seem to burst into tears with emotion, and shaking with delight would open its eyes like bright butterflies and suddenly bring forth its heavy burden of new clusters. If I trimmed the citron tree, it would rise lithe with grace and dazzling with beauty, and with its tufted branches would build wonderful shady arches to cool our bodies from the noon-day heat and to shower fragrances on our

sleep at night, while its light golden fruit would refresh our very being.

Yes, it is the earth God has blessed with feeling and not that senseless monster that wipes off your track as soon as your keel has opened it, jealous of any sign that anyone might try to leave on eternity. Praise the sea all you may; flatter it, sing of it; its answer is a thrust for you to get away, a murmur of discontent at your presence, or an untamed tiger's roar with which it tries to open a grave for you. Cain, after his crime, should have been condemned to a seaman's life.

At sunset we would walk back to the village. Mary would go ahead in the midst of her playful goats shaking their bells as they frisked about merrily. I would follow with the pick on my shoulder leading behind me the mule loaded with logs for fuel. Then, at home, while Mary lighted the fire to make supper, I would light my pipe and sit down comfortably at the threshold in the midst of a blond honeysuckle that spread lustily over the walls in the midst of scented royal mints and spearmints and sweet marjorams, generous little plants that asked for nothing but a handful of proper earth and a drop of water to bathe us with fragrance and grace.

From this place I would exchange greetings with passing neighbors, greetings that trickled from the very heart.

"Good evening!"

"Good evening to you!"

"Good night!"

"Good luck to you!"

I did not have to look anxiously at the sky any longer. I did not have to consider the position of the moon, the trembling light of the stars, the course of the wind, the rise of the Pleiades. And late at night, when I cast anchor in my love's arms, what bay or what luring port could ever give me such happiness!

So two years passed and now we were in the third. One Sunday in February I went with my wife to my old town of St. Nicholas by the Sea. Her cousin, Captain Malamos was christening his brig and had invited us to the joyful occasion. It was a beautiful day, which was the first awakening of my old longing. The dock was covered with timber, masts, beams, splinters, and woodshavings. The air was filled with the smell of the sea brine, the scent of freshly cut timber, the heavy odor of tar, pitch and ropes. There were hills of hemp and piles of steel pieces. From one end of the beach to the other there was an array of little row-boats beautifully painted, brigs careened, luggers stripped of all rigging and old hulls covered with barnacles and seaweeds. There were skeletons of cutters, schooners, and brigantines, some with just the keel and the sea-steps, others ribbed and planked up to the gunwale, others only halfway up. Any tool a seaman might wish for was there; and any seaman's dreams, ambitions, simple longings,

and great hopes could be found on that gold-sanded beach, expressed vividly in some wooden structure by some shipbuilder's hands. The guests—the whole island, it seemed—old men and young boys, old women and young girls, moved in their Sunday clothes from one ship's frame to another. The boys hopped from place to place. The men handled their parts with knowing pride and often they spoke to them as if they were living things. The veterans of the sea sized up each ship's worth, estimated its speed, measured its tonnage, recounted the profits it might bring, and gave their advice to the master builder on everything. At last, they concluded by wishing the owner of each ship that its nails might turn to gold for him.

Captain Malamos' brig was standing in its dock with its fine and lovely hull, with its many props on both sides like a huge centipede sleeping on the sandy beach. Its prow curved like a delicately wrought saber; its stern was girded with garlands of flowers. A glistening meadow of pure azure, the sea, spread before it, shimmering playfully and reaching for the ship's feet with little tongues of rippling water. She sprinkled it with her lukewarm spray, made it fragrant with her salt breath and sang to it a secret confiding song: "Come," she sang, "come to lie on my bosom. I will give you life with my kiss; I will breathe a soul into you and will make you fly on strong wings. Why do you lie there, a mass of soulless timber, like something heavy

with sleep? Are you not weary of the torpor of the forest and its life of no will? Shame to you! Come out into the sun, and the air, and the light! Come to wrestle with the wave and ride victor over it! With raised breast meet the strong wind and tear him into tatters. You will be the whale's envy, the dolphin's mate, the sea-gull's comfort, the sailor's song; your captain's pride. Come, my bride, come!" and the ship seemed to feel the spell of the sea and began to creak, eager to leave its bed where it lay in idleness.

All about, the guests were crowding. Captain Malamos stood by with a smooth-shaved, smiling face, dressed in his best, with a broad scarf about his waist. Near him, his wife, in a dress of silk, looked like a bride. They seemed to live their wedding day once more, while a violin, a mandolin, and a drum played their gay melodies with a spirit that seemed determined to carry the glad tidings to the ends of the earth.

Would you believe it? I was not happy in the least. As I was sitting towards the end nearest the sea, I would see her little ripples reaching at my feet, and a certain sadness wrung my heart. My first sweetheart, whom I had not seen for years, was now facing me again, young and beautiful, clothed in her raiment of sapphire blue. Her face smiled with perfect gladness; and I thought that she had her eyes fixed on me and that she spoke words of regretful complaint:

"Faithless one! Deceiver! Coward!"

"Get thee behind me, Satan!" I said to myself, and made the sign of the cross.

I wanted to get away but my feet refused. My body seemed like a mass of lead that was stuck to the rock; and my eyes, my ears, my soul were a helpless prey to the wave which continued to sing its sad complaint:

"Faithless one! Deceiver! Coward!"

Tears almost came to my eyes. My hatred for the sea, her tyranny, her crimes, the sleepless nights and my fruitless labor, all, vanished from my mind like bad dreams. I only remembered my first joys, the glad drunkenness of the sea, the charm of wandering over her, the magic shiver of her dangers, the sheer enjoyment of escaping them, the recklessness of a sailor's life. All these joys I had abandoned for the sake of a woman.

"Well, what makes you so thoughtful, life of mine?" I heard a voice beside me. I turned and saw Mary, beautiful and smiling, with her lithe body, her fresh lips, her full breast, her shining eyes, and her coal-black hair. I felt confused and guilty as if I had been caught in the act of deceiving her.

"Nothing," I murmured; "nothing! Lend me a hand to get up. I feel dizzy."

I took her hand and grasped her with intense eagerness as if I were in danger of falling into the cold darkness of an abyss. The priest, in his vestments, was read-

ing his prayers over the new ship. The shipbuilder began giving his commands:

"Let go the stern prop! Let go the prow! Loosen the sides now!"

One after another the props fell from the hull and the brig began to shake as if still stiff from sleep and hesitating to plunge forward into its new life. The boys that had climbed on deck were running from stern to prow and from starboard to port, making a noise like a flock of sheep.

The hands had taken their places beside the hull in order to push it into the sea. The master-builder commanded again:

"Let go!"

At the united effort of so many breasts, the ship groaned, shook once more, and finally glided, like a duck, into the water with its youthful crew on deck.

"Good luck to it, Captain Malamos! Good luck to it. May her nails turn to gold for you!" the crowd of seamen shouted, and sprinkled the captain and his wife with spray.

But at that moment one of the boys on deck stumbled as he ran and fell senseless overboard. On the same instant, I plunged into the sea with my clothes on. With the second dive I pulled the boy to the surface. I saved the boy but the meshes of the sea were tight about me and none could save me. From that time on I could neither sleep nor rest. Joy had left me forever. That

plunge into the sea, her warm water that had embraced me, was now dragging my soul a slave behind it. I remembered its touch was like warm kisses that sent an electric current down my back. With my open eyes I saw before me a bride clothed in blue; young, glad, and tender, nodding to me from the distance to follow her. I could hear her call: "Come! Come!"

I could not work any longer. I tried to go back to my orchard, field and vineyard, but all seemed to me walled in and narrow. The shade of the citron tree was heavy and cold. The vine-twigs with their knots seemed disgustingly ugly, like a lobster's legs. The furrows of the field, cheap. So I spent day after day on the beach plunging in the water. I felt its touch with shivers of delight. I caught hungrily its salt breath and I wallowed in bliss among the seaweeds as on a bed of soft feathers and silk. I would spend hours picking sea urchins and crabs. Often I would go down to the harbor and with some hesitation draw near the groups of sailors to hear them talk about their rigs, and travels, and storms, and shipwrecks. They would hardly look at me. You see, I was only a peasant, an old farmer, while they were sailors, dolphins of the sea. What could a poplar have to do with rhubarb? How could it stoop from its height to see the little weed at its feet? They could not even count me as present in their company. The younger sailors would look at me with wonder as if they said: "Where does this ghost

come from?" The older men who once had been my friends and my mates would occasionally deign to address me with a jest:

"Now, Yanne, you have your hawsers pretty tight. You don't have to worry about wind or sea. You've cast anchor for good!"

Their eyes had such an expression of pity that I could read in them what they did not speak in words: "You are a dead man! You don't belong to the living world any longer!" So I turned to the beach to tell my troubles to the waves. At the end, I turned back to my early years and consoled myself with little ships which I built with my hands. My skill was mature now and I could make them with oak masts and actual stays and sails, while my imagination was again aflame and made triple-decked barks out of them. I was a child again.

Mary watched me and wondered about my change. Often she thought I was turning insane and prayed to Virgin Mary to help me. She made more than one vow to the Holy Virgin of Tenos, and went on many pilgrimages to the neighboring country shrines with bare feet. She had prayers read over my clothes, and often beating her breast with anxiety, she called on the saints and tried to secure their help in bringing me back to my senses again.

"Mary," I said to her once, "there's nothing that will help. Neither saints nor vows can cure my trouble. I

am a child of the sea. It calls and I must go. Sooner or later I must return to my old trade. Else I could not live."

As soon as she heard it she put on mourning. At last she knew the serpent that had been biting her so long in secret.

"Your trade!" she cried; "to be a sailor—and poor again!"

"Yes, a sailor! I can't help it. The sea is calling me!"

But she could not understand. She would not hear of it. She cried and prayed. She threw her arms about me, pressed me to her bosom, and covered me with kisses, clinging to me with despair, anxious in her jealousy to make me see the toil of the sea, its dangers, and shipwrecks. She would abuse the sea, find a thousand faults with it, and curse it as if it was her rival. But all was in vain. Neither her arms nor her kisses could bind me any longer. Everything seemed cold and wearisome, even my bed.

One evening, about sunset, as I was sitting on the rocks by the sea, plunged in my usual thought, I saw before me a brig sailing by, with all her sails bulging with the wind. It looked like a cliff of light rising suddenly from the midst of the sea. All her spars and stays were painted with wonderful distinctness against the blue sky. I saw the jibs, the courses, the top-sails, the top-gallants, the trucks. I believe I could even see

the billet-head. My eyes seemed to get a supernatural power so that they could turn timber to crystal and reach the very depths of the ship. I could see the captain's cabin adorned with the picture of St. Nicholas and his never-failing candle. I could see the sailors' bunks, hear their simple talk, and feel their sour smell. I could see the kitchen, the water-barrels, the pump, the capstan. My soul, like a homesick bird, had perched on the full-rigged ship. I heard the wind whistling past the stays and shrouds, singing with a harmony more than divine of a seaman's life; and before my eyes passed on winged feet virgins with fair hair and black hair, virgins with blue eyes and dark eyes, and virgins with flowers, showing their bare breasts and sending me distant kisses. Then I saw noisy ports, taverns filled with smoke and wine-cups and resounding with sweet voiced guitars and tambourines. Suddenly I saw a sailor pointing at me and heard him say to his companion:

"There goes one who renounced the sea for fear of it!"

I sprang up like a madman. Never for fear! Never, I thought, and ran back to the house. Mary had gone out to the brook. So much the better. I took a purse from under my pillow, cast a last glance on the bed, and with a pack of clothes on my shoulder, I disappeared like a thief. It was dark when I reached St. Nicholas, but without losing any time I jumped into a boat and rowed to the brig.

Life has been a phantom for me ever since. If you ask me if I regret it, I would not know what to answer. But even should I go back to my island now, I could never rest.

The sea claims me.

THE SIN OF MY MOTHER

By George T. Bizyenos

THE SIN OF MY MOTHER

We had only one sister, little Annio, the pet of our small family, and beloved by all. Mother cared more for her than for any others, and at table she placed Annio by her side, and gave her the best of whatever there was to eat. And she always bought new materials for little Annio's dresses, although the rest of us had our clothes made out of the old garments of our late father. Annio was not even urged in her studies. She went to school only when she wanted to, and remained at home when she wished. To us boys such indulgence was never permitted.

Such partiality might easily have led to destructive jealousies, especially among such small children as my two brothers and myself. We felt, however, that our mother's inner affection was equally divided among us, and that this preference she showed was merely because Annio was the only girl of the family. Besides Annio was very delicate. Even our youngest brother, born after Father's death, who had a right to expect his mother's caresses more than anyone else, willingly conceded to his sister all his privileges.

With all this spoiling at the hands of the whole fam-

ily, Annio was neither spoiled, nor conceited. On the contrary, she was always docile and affectionate, and her tenderness to us increased as the disease which was consuming her developed. How vividly I remember her large black eyes, and her beautifully curved eyebrows, which became blacker as her face grew ever paler. Her expression, usually sad and dreamy, assumed a sweet serenity when we were with her. She kept under her pillow the fruit which the neighbors brought her, and divided it among us when we came back from school. She had to do this on the sly, because Mother did not like to see us devour what was meant for her sick daughter.

As Annio's health became worse, Mother's attentions were more and more concentrated on her. Up to this time Mother had never gone out of the house, because she had been left a widow too young, and was ashamed to use the freedom which, even in Turkey, was granted to the mother of many children; but from the day that Annio took seriously to her bed, Mother cast all restraint aside. Did she hear that some one had an illness like Annio's, she would rush to inquire how it was being cured; did she learn of some old woman who had herbs of wonderful curative powers, she would hasten to buy them; or if she heard that a stranger famed for his knowledge had come to town, she would not hesitate to call for his help. According to the popular belief among us, any learned person knew everything; and often mys-

terious beings of superhuman powers appeared under the guise of poor travelers.

The fat barber of our neighborhood used to call upon us, uninvited, conscious of his right to do so as the only accredited doctor of our district. As soon as we espied him it was my duty to run to the grocer, because the barber never approached our sick one without gulping down at least fifty drams of raki.

"I am an old man, my good woman," he would say to my impatient mother, "I am an old man, and unless I warm up a bit, my eyes cannot see very well."

Indeed, he was not lying about this, since the more he drank the easier it was for him to find out which was the fattest hen in our yard, to take with him when he left the house.

After a while Mother no longer made use of his medicines, although she paid him regularly and uncomplainingly, first because she did not wish to displease him, and secondly because he was often able to comfort her with the assurance that the disease was progressing according to science and to his prescriptions.

Unfortunately his statements were only too well founded, and every day our little sister's condition grew worse. The persistence of the unknown malady worked on our mother's mind, since any sickness foreign to the country, in order to be thought natural, must either soon yield to the simple remedies known to the district, or kill the patient. If it persists, it is con-

sidered supernatural, and is attributed to the devil. The sufferer must have sat in a cursed spot; must have crossed a river at night, when invisible fairies were performing their rites; or must have ridden a black cat, which was the devil in disguise.

Our mother was more religious than superstitious. She gave no credence to these causes for the illness, and absolutely declined to use the prescribed magics, fearing to sin against God; yet to be on the safe side, she summoned the priest to Annio's bedside to exorcise the evil spirit. Later, however, as the condition of our sister grew worse, mother-love triumphed over the fear of sin, and religion was forced to compromise with superstition. Next to the cross on Annio's breast, Mother placed a charm, written in mysterious Arabic letters. The blessing of the priest was succeeded by magic art, and after the holy water, came consultation with various magicians.

All was in vain. Annio became ever weaker, and Mother seemed to forget that she had any other children. An old woman who had lived with us for many years looked after us as well as her extreme age permitted. Sometimes we did not see our mother for days. She was either running to some miraculous place, there to tie a piece from a dress of Annio's, in the hope that the evil and mysterious disease might be left there; or else she was going to some nearby village whose church happened to be celebrating its anniversary, carrying with

her a yellow wax taper, as tall as our sister, made with her own hands.

Again all was in vain. Our poor little sister's disease was incurable. Everyone said she must be possessed. Mother no longer doubted it, and even Annio began to suspect it.

After all other means had been exhausted, she came to the last resort. She lifted the withered child in her arms and carried her to the church. My older brother and I shouldered the bed-clothes and followed her. There, before the very ikon of the Virgin, upon the damp, cold tiles, we made up the bed and laid upon it the sweetest object of our care, our one and only sister.

She was to remain forty days in the church, before the holy altar and the ikon of the holy Mother of our Saviour. Only their mercy and pity could now save her from the satanic ailment gnawing at the tender tree of her life. It had to be forty days since it is known that in the invisible fight between divine Providence and the devils, the terrible persistency of the latter was able to endure for that length of time. After that length of time Evil is defeated and retreats shamefully. Tales are rife of the sufferer's feelings in his organism, the awful agonies of the last battle, and of his seeing the enemies departing in all sorts of shapes, especially at the moment when the priests carry the holy vessels, chanting: "With fear!"

Fortunate those who have strength to endure the shock of the battle. The weak ones are broken by the grandeur of the miracle performed within them, but they do not regret it; for if they lose life, they gain something far more precious: the salvation of their souls!

The possibility that Annio was too weak to withstand the miracle was worrying Mother. No sooner had she settled her in her bed than she began to ask her how she felt. But Annio was not depressed. The sanctity of the place, the holy ikons, and the incense had a kindly influence over her spirit, and she became cheerful and jesting.

Mother went on: "Which one of your brothers would you like to have stay here with us, as a playmate?" she asked tenderly—"little Christos, or little George?"

Annio gave her a sidelong glance full of meaning, as if wishing to reprove her for her long indifference to us, as she replied:

"Which one do I want? I don't want one without the others. I want all—all the brothers I have."

Mother felt the rebuke, and remained silent. Then she returned home and brought our youngest brother to the church, but only for that first day. Late in the evening she sent the other two home, and only kept me with them.

I still remember the impression that first night in the

church made on my childish imagination. The feeble flames of the tiny oil lamps hanging before the ikons barely lighted them and the steps in front of them, leaving us in a blackness far more awesome and terrifying than if we had been entirely in the dark. Whenever the nearest light to us flickered, it seemed to me as if the saint hanging on the wall opposite, in his flowing red robes and with his crown upon his head, his eyes staring from his pale, lifeless face, began to move and try to detach himself from the wood on which he was painted. And again, when the cold wind shrilled through the tall church windows, shaking their little panes noisily, I imagined that the dead, buried in the churchyard, had risen and were trying to climb the walls and come into the church. Trembling with horror, I fancied I saw a skeleton warming his fleshless hands at the little charcoal fire we had brought with us in a brazier.

And I dared betray nothing of my fear. I was proud to have been chosen to stay with my beloved sister and my mother, and the latter would undoubtedly have packed me home had she suspected that I was afraid to remain in the church. So, on this night, and on those that followed I endured my miseries with forced stoicism, doing my duty cheerfully, and trying to be as helpful as possible. I tended the fire, I brought water from the well, and on week-days I swept the church. On Sundays and holidays, during mass, I helped my sister to walk up to the gate of the altar, while the Bible

was read, and to stand there. Then I spread the home-spun rug on which Annio stretched herself, face downward, so that the priest carrying the holy vessels might step over her. At the end of the service I brought her pillow to the left door of the Inner Shrine, where Annio knelt while the priest laid his vestments on her as he took them off, and, touching her with the holy lance, whispered: "By Thy cross, oh, Christ, the enemy's tyranny was overthrown, and the power of darkness lay underfoot."

During all these ceremonies my poor little sister followed me with her slow and uncertain steps, her sad and melancholy face exciting the pity of the congregation and invoking their prayers for her recovery, a recovery, alas! that was terribly slow in coming. On the contrary, the dampness and the unaccustomed cold of the church, which was very intense during the night, aggravated Annio's condition, which inspired the worst fears in us. My mother, even in church, began to show a lamentable indifference to everything that did not directly concern her sick child. She no longer opened her lips except to speak to Annio, or to pray to the saints.

One day, while on her knees, she was weeping before the ikon of the Saviour, I approached her, unnoticed, and heard her say:

"Take whichever child Thou wilt, only let me keep Annio. I see that Thou *must* take one. Thou hast remembered my sin, and art determined to have one of

my children to punish me. I thank Thee, oh Lord."

After a minute of silence so intense that I could hear her tears dropping on the tiles, she sighed from the depth of her heart, and added:

"I have brought two of my children to Thy feet. Take them—but let me keep the little girl."

As I heard these words icy shivers ran up and down my spine, and my ears rang. I stopped to hear no more. My mother, overcome by her great grief, fell in a heap on the floor. Instead of running to her assistance, I rushed out of the church and ran like mad, screaming at the top of my lungs, as if Death were actually pursuing me.

My breath gave out and I could scream no more, but my teeth chattered as I ran on and on. When next I noticed where I was, I found myself far from the church. I ventured to look back. No one was chasing me. Little by little I came to myself, and began to recall all my life. I remembered all the love and tenderness I had felt for my mother, and the caresses I had bestowed on her. Had I ever failed her or been unkind to her? No! Yet ever since my sister had been born I had not been loved as I should have been, but had constantly been pushed aside. Then it came to my mind—and for the first time I understood its meaning—that my father had often referred to me as his slighted one. My heart ached, and I began to cry.

"My mother doesn't love me!" I sobbed. "She no

longer wants me. I shall never again go back to the church." I returned home sad and discouraged.

Soon afterwards Mother came, too, with Annio, because the priest, disturbed by my cries, had gone into the church and, seeing the condition of our sister, had advised Mother to take her home.

"God is great, my daughter," he had said. "His divine mercy reaches all over the universe. If your little girl is to be cured, He can cure her just as well at home."

Unhappy the mother who hears such words, since this is the usual formula of the priests when they send away those about to die, in order that they may not breathe their last in the church and thus pollute its holiness.

When I next saw my mother she was sadder than ever. Toward me, however, she had never been gentler or kinder. She took me in her arms, patted me, and kissed me tenderly, over and over again. One would say she was trying to atone to me for what she had prayed.

That night I could neither eat nor sleep. When I went to bed, I lay awake with burning eyes, and with ears aware of every movement of my mother's, who, as usual, was watching by the bedside of Annio. It must have been about midnight when I heard her move around the room. At first I thought she was getting ready for bed, but I was mistaken, for presently she sat down and began to chant in a low voice. It was the death lamen-

tation for our father, which Mother often used to sing, before Annio was taken ill. It was the first time I had heard her sing it since then.

The chant was one which a certain ragged, sunburned gipsy—renowned in our district for such improvisations—had composed at the express order of my mother, at the time of our father's death. I well remember the gipsy's black oily hair, and his small flaming eyes, as seated inside our door, surrounded by the kitchen utensils he had come to re-tin, he composed the lamentation to the accompaniment of a three-stringed lyre. Before him our mother had stood, Annio in her arms, attentively listening and crying. I, holding tight to her dress, hid my face in its folds, since the sweeter the tones of the music, the more terrible had seemed the face of the wild singer.

When Mother had learned the sad improvisation by heart, she had untied the corner of her indoor veil, taken from it two gold pieces and given them to the gipsy. (At the time we still had many gold pieces.) After paying him she offered him bread, wine, and other food. While he was eating downstairs, Mother, on the upper floor repeated the chant again and again, so that she might burn it into her memory. She seemed to find it very beautiful indeed, for when she saw the gipsy leaving, she rushed after him and presented him with a pair of Father's long, loose trousers.

"May God absolve your husband, bride," the singer

had cried, surprised, and, shouldering his kit, had gone his way.

That chant Mother was singing now. My tears flowed silently as I listened to her, and I dared not move. Suddenly the scent of incense came to my nostrils.

"Oh! our little Annio is dead!" I said to myself, and jumped from my bed.

I found myself before a most peculiar scene. Sister was not dead, but breathing heavily, as usual. Near her was laid out a man's attire, in the order in which it is worn. At the left was a stool, covered with black cloth. A bowl full of water was on it, with two lighted candles, one on either side. Mother, on her knees, was waving the incense-burner before these objects, attentively watching the surface of the water.

I must have turned yellow with fright, for she hastened to reassure me:

"Don't be afraid, my little one," she said mysteriously. "These are your father's clothes. Come and pray to him, too, so that he may save our little Annio."

She made me sit down by her side, and I, carried away by her exaltation, between my sobs, prayed:

"Come, Father, come and take me instead, so that Annio may be cured!"

I cast a pathetic look upon my mother, to show her that I knew she had prayed for my death, not realizing that I was pushing her despair to its limit. I hope

she has forgiven me. I was little then and unable to judge her heart.

After a few moments of deep silence she once more waved the incense-burner, and again concentrated her whole attention upon the water in the bowl.

Suddenly a tiny moth, circling over the water, touched it with its wings, lightly ruffling its surface. Mother bent reverently, and made the sign of the cross, as if she were in church before the holy altar.

"Make the sign of the cross, my boy," she whispered, deeply moved, and not daring to raise her eyes. Mechanically I obeyed.

When the little moth vanished in the depth of the room, Mother gave a sigh of relief, and arose serene and content.

"Your father's soul has passed by," she said, her eyes still following the course of the moth with affection and worship. Then she drank from the water, and made me drink, too. Afterwards she approached the bed of little Annio. Sister was not asleep, nor was she altogether awake. Her eyes were half closed, and through the dark, thick lashes a curious light could be seen. Mother raised the emaciated body of the little girl carefully. Supporting her back with one hand, she brought the vessel to her withered lips with the other.

"Come, my little love, drink from the water that will cure you!"

Annio did not open her eyes, but she seemed to hear

the voice and understand the words. A sweet smile moved her lips, then she drank a few drops of that water which was indeed destined to cure her. As soon as she swallowed it, she opened her eyes and tried to breathe; a gentle sigh escaped her lips, then she fell back upon our mother's breast. Poor little Annio was at last free from pain.

Many people had criticized Mother, at Father's funeral, because while outsiders lamented him loudly, the tears she shed were silent. The poor woman had acted this way through fear of being misunderstood, and of going beyond the limits assigned to youth. As I have already said, Mother was extremely young when she became a widow.

When sister died, Mother was not much older, but she cared nothing as to what the world would say, and without restraint did she abandon herself to her heart-breaking sorrow. The whole neighborhood came to console her; but her terrible grief was inconsolable, and, seeing her lamenting between the graves of our father and sister, people whispered to each other:

"She surely will go mad!"

"She will leave her other children in the streets!" said others, afterwards, meeting us, neglected and abandoned.

It required time, it required all the counsels and even the reprimands of the Church to bring her to her senses, to remind her that she had living children, to force her

to assume once more her home duties. Only then did she realize where the long illness of our sister had brought us to.

All our money had gone for doctors and medicines. Many of our rugs and coverings, the work of her own hands, she had sold for almost nothing, or had given away as rewards to magicians and miracle-workers. Others of our goods had been stolen by those same charlatans, who had made capital out of the disorders reigning in our household. Worst of all, our food supplies were all exhausted.

This serious condition of affairs, instead of frightening our mother, seemed to double the energy she had possessed before our sister had fallen ill. She put aside her grief, conquered the timidity of her youth and sex, and hired herself out to work with the pick in the fields, as if she had never known an independent and comfortable life. For a number of years thereafter she supported us by the sweat of her brow. Her earnings were small, our necessities great, yet she permitted none of us to relieve her by working with her. Nightly, before the open fire, we discussed the plans for our future. The first-born was to learn our father's trade, so that he might take his place in our family, while I was to emigrate to a foreign land. Above all, we were to continue our school, and finish our studies, Mother continually repeating the proverb, "An uneducated man is like unplaned wood."

Our economic difficulties reached their height one year when there was a bad crop, and the price of eatables rose. Instead of letting this discourage her, Mother decided to adopt a little girl into our family—one whom she had made many previous efforts to adopt. This event changed the monotony and severity of our lives, and brought some cheerfulness into them.

The rite of adoption was made a festival. Then, for the first time, Mother dressed in her best clothes, and led us boys to church, as clean and tidy as if we were to partake of communion. At the close of service we all stood before the ikon of Christ, and there, surrounded by the congregation, and in the presence of the child's parents, Mother took from the hand of the priest the adopted girl, promising to love and bring her up as if she were flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone.

The little girl's entrance into our house was made with no less ceremony, and triumphantly. The oldest man of the village and Mother, leading the little girl between them, headed the procession. We followed. Then came the parents and relatives of our new sister, who accompanied us to the very entrance of our home.

The oldest man, lifting the girl above the crowd, asked loudly: "Which one of you present is more her parent, more her relative, or belongs more to her than Mistress Michaliessa and her people?"

The father of the little girl was pale, and stared sadly

in front of him. His wife, leaning on his shoulder, was weeping. Mother trembled, fearing lest she should hear a voice cry, "I!" which would have put an end to her happiness. Fortunately no one answered. Then the parents of the child embraced her for the last time, and went away, accompanied by their relatives, while ours, with the oldest man of the village, entered our home and partook of our hospitality.

From that time on Mother bestowed upon our adopted sister a care that she had denied to us, her sons, at her age, and when our condition was much more prosperous. Later, when I was a homesick wanderer in a foreign land, and my other brothers were undergoing all the hardships of apprenticeship, and sleeping in the shops of their masters, the stranger girl reigned in our household as if it had been her own.

Although the small earnings of my brothers were not enough to support our mother, instead of using them for her own benefit, she laid them aside for the dowry of her adopted daughter, and continued to work for the support of both. I was far away, and for many years did not know what happened in our home. Before I could return, the adopted girl grew up, was educated, dowried, and given in marriage as though she were a real member of our family. Her marriage was a real joy for my brothers, and they drew sighs of relief at getting rid, at last, of the added burden. Moreover, the girl had never felt for them true sisterly love, and

finally even proved ungrateful to the woman who had done so much for her.

There was thus ample reason for their feeling of relief at getting rid of the girl, and there was also good reason for them to hope that Mother had learned her lesson. What, then, was their stupefaction when a few days after the marriage, Mother appeared, tenderly hugging another little girl, this time a wee baby.

"The poor little thing!" she exclaimed, bending lovingly over the infant. "As if it were not enough to be born after its father had gone, its mother died, too, and it was left in the streets."

It seemed as if the unfortunate occurrence was actually pleasing to her, and she exhibited her booty triumphantly to my brothers, who stood aghast. Their filial respect was great; their mother's authority equally so; but so disgusted were they with this action of their mother, that they did not hesitate politely to suggest to her that it would be better if she gave up the child. All was of no avail: she was determined to keep it. Only then did they openly give voice to their displeasure, and threaten to withhold their earnings from her. Even this had no effect.

"Don't give me anything!" she cried. "I will support her myself, as I have supported you, and when my little George returns from his wanderings, he will dower her and find her a husband. You may not know it, but he has promised that to me. 'Mother,' he said,

'I will support you and the child of your soul.' Those were his exact words, bless him!"

"Little George," of course, was I, and I had given the promise years ago, under the following circumstances, when Mother was working to support our first adopted sister as well as ourselves. During my vacations I used to accompany her to the fields, and play by her side while she dug and planted. One day of extreme heat, she almost fainted, and was forced to stop work and return home. On the way we were overtaken by a terrific rainstorm, such as often follows great heat in our part of the country. We were not far from our village, but had to cross a small stream which, swollen by the rain, was turbulently rushing along between its banks. Mother wanted to carry me across on her shoulders, but I would not let her.

"You are still weak from your fainting spell," I said. "You might let me fall."

Before she could hold me back I raised my dress and sprang into the stream. Unfortunately I had counted too much on my own strength. The rushing water swept me from my feet, and I was carried away like a nutshell. After that all I remember distinctly was my mother's agonized shriek as she cast herself into the water after me.

It was little less than a miracle that we were not both drowned. The stream was the most treacherous in the district. Whenever they said "The river took him,"

they meant this particular stream. Yet, exhausted as Mother had been, and handicapped by her heavy native costume, which alone might have drowned even an expert swimmer, she did not hesitate to risk her life to save the child whom formerly she had been willing to offer to God in exchange for her little daughter.

Somehow she saved me. When we reached home, and she put me down from her shoulder, I was still dazed, and instead of attributing the accident to my recklessness, I thought it was the result of her having labored in the hot sun.

"Don't work any more, Mother mine!" I urged, while she was changing my wet clothes.

"Who will feed us, if I don't work?" she asked with a sigh.

"I will, Mother, I will!" I cried, with boyish eagerness.

"And the child of my soul—who will feed her?"

"I will support her, too."

In spite of herself, Mother smiled at the grandiose manner in which I made this declaration. She put a stop to the conversation by saying: "You had better feed yourself first, and then we'll see."

Not long after this, young as I was, I went away for foreign parts. Mother probably did not consider that promise seriously. I did, and always remembered that I owed my life to her for the second time. I kept the promise in my heart, and the older I grew the more

seriously I considered myself bound by it. When I bade her good-bye I said:

"Don't weep, Mother, dear. I am going to make money, and you must not forget that from now on I am going to support you and your adopted daughter. Do you hear? You are no longer to work yourself!"

I was far from realizing that a boy of ten not only was unable to support his mother, but would find it hard to support himself. I could not imagine the terrible hardships that were in store for me, nor the bitterness that my mother was to taste through that separation which I thought would enable me to lighten her burden. For years I was unable to send her any money—was unable even to send her a letter. During those years she continually watched the road, and inquired of all travellers if they had seen me anywhere. Sometimes people told her that I was so miserable in Constantinople that I had turned Turk.

"May they eat their tongues, those who say that!" answered my mother. "That boy could never be mine."

Yet, after a while the thing began to prey on her. She would shut herself up in front of the ikonostase, and, weeping, would ask God to guide me to return to the faith of my fathers.

At other times people would tell her that I had been shipwrecked on the shores of Cyprus, and was begging in the street in rags.

"May fire burn them!" was her reply. "It is their

jealousy that makes them say those things. My son probably has made a fortune, and has gone to visit the Holy Sepulchre."

Yet she went more than ever on the street, speaking with the travelling beggars, and whenever she heard of a shipwrecked sailor, she hunted him up, in the hope of discovering in him her own son, and denying herself to give to him, in the hope that others might do for her boy what she was doing for him.

But when it became a question of her second adopted daughter, she forgot all her fears concerning me, and used me as a threat against my brothers, telling them that I should put them to shame with my generosity when I returned home. She announced stoutly that I would dower and find a husband for her new daughter, with all pomp and ceremony.

"Yes, you may not know it, but my boy has promised that to me, my blessings be upon him."

Fortunately, the bad news about me was not true, and when, after a long absence, I returned home, I was in a position to keep my promise as far as my mother was concerned. Toward her adopted daughter, however, she did not find me as willing as she had hoped. On the contrary, much to my mother's surprise, I expressed myself as unwilling to support the girl.

It was not that I objected to my mother's weakness for girls, since I, too, liked them, and desired nothing better than to find a sister at home whose happy face

and gentle ministrations would banish loneliness from my heart and help to wipe the vicissitudes of my exile from my memory. In exchange I would have related to her the wonders of foreign lands, the details of my wanderings and of my achievements; I would have been willing to buy her whatever she wished, to take her to dances and to fairs, to dower her, and finally to dance at her wedding.

But that sister I imagined as beautiful and sympathetic, clever and cultivated, bookish and skilled in embroidery—in short, possessing all the virtues of the girls I had met in my travels. What did I find instead? The exact opposite! Mother's adopted daughter was a little misshapen, hectic child. And, worse than all, she was stupid.

"Send away Katarinio," I said one day to my mother; "send her away if you love me. I am speaking to you seriously. I will get you another child from Constantinople—a pretty, clever child, who will become an ornament to our house." In glowing colors I went on to describe the other orphan I was to get for her, and how much I should love her.

When I looked at my mother I saw with surprise that great silent tears were running down her pale cheeks, while her eyes expressed indescribable sorrow.

"Alas!" she exclaimed despairingly, "I had hoped that you, at least, would love Katarinio, but I was mistaken. Your brothers don't want any sister at all,

while you want a different one. Is the poor little thing responsible because God created her as she is? If you had a sister of your own who was neither clever nor pretty, would you have thrown her into the street in order to take another one?"

"No, Mother, certainly not. She would have been your own child as much as I, while Katarinio is nothing but a stranger to us."

"No," my mother sobbed, "she is not a stranger! She is mine! I took her from the dead body itself of her mother, when she was only three months old, and whenever she wept, I offered her my breast to make her think she had a mother. I wrapped her in your swaddling clothes and rocked her to sleep in your cradle. She is my child, I tell you, and she is your sister."

After these words, passionately uttered, she raised her head and looked me straight in the eyes. She waited as though insisting upon an answer. I did not dare to reply, whereupon she cast down her eyes, and went on in sad, weak tones:

"What can I do? I, too, would have liked her different; but you see my sin has not yet been absolved, and God has sent her to me such as she is to test my patience. Forgive me—I thank Thee, oh, Lord."

She placed her right hand upon her breast, raised her eyes, full of tears, to the heavens, and remained silent.

"Mother, don't be angry with me, but have you some-

thing weighing on your heart?" and to soften my question, I bent down and kissed her hand.

"Yes, I have something heavy there, very heavy, my son. Till now only God and my confessor have known it. You are versed in books, and it may be even better to tell you than my confessor. Go close the door, and then come back and sit by me, so that I may tell you. Perhaps you may be able to comfort me a little, to have pity on me, and to bring yourself to love Katarinio as if she were your own sister."

Her words, as well as the way in which she said them, troubled me very much. What could there be that Mother wished to confide to me apart from my brothers? All the miseries she had endured during my absence, she had already told me. Her life before that I knew as an oft-told tale. What could there be that she had kept from us, all this time, and had only dared disclose to God and to her confessor?

When I came back to sit by her, my knees were trembling from apprehension of I knew not what, while my mother hung her head, like one conscious of a terrible crime, before her judge. After a few moments of oppressive silence, she asked: "Do you remember our little Annio?"

"Certainly, Mother. I couldn't forget her. She was our only sister, and she breathed her last before my eyes."

"Yes," my mother went on with a deep sigh, "but

she was not my only daughter. You are four years younger than Christaki. Between you, I had my first daughter. She was born at the time that Photis, the miller, was about to be married. Your father was to be the best man, and wanted me to be the matron; therefore he had the marriage postponed for forty days, in order that I might mingle with the people and enjoy myself, now that I was a married woman—as a girl I never went out, owing to the strictness of your grandmother.

"The ceremony took place in the morning, and in the evening all the guests gathered together for the festivities. Violins were playing, the guests were feasting, and the wine-jug was passing from hand to hand. Your father, who was of a jovial disposition and making merry with the best of them, tossed me his handkerchief, and I rose to dance with him. I was young and loved to dance, so we started and the others followed; but we danced better, and held out longer than anyone else.

"Toward midnight I took your father aside and said to him: 'Husband, I have a baby in the cradle, and can't stay here any longer. My wee one must be hungry. I cannot nurse her here before everyone, and with my best gown on, too. You stay, if you like, and enjoy yourself, but I must take my baby and go home.'

"'All right, wife,' answered your absolved father, patting me on the back. 'Come and dance once more,

and then we will leave here. The wine is really going to my head a little, and I am glad of an excuse to say good-bye.'

"After our dance we took our leave. The bridegroom ordered the players to accompany us halfway home. We had a long way to go, the marriage having taken place in Karsimachala. Our servant preceded us with a lantern. Your father carried the baby, and held me, too, by the hand.

" 'Are you tired, wife?'

" 'Yes, Michalio, I am tired.'

" 'Well, just a little courage and we'll soon be home. I'll make the beds myself. I am sorry I made you dance so much.'

" 'I don't mind, husband,' I answered. 'I did it to please you. Tomorrow I can rest.'

"When we reached home I nursed the baby, while Father made the beds. Your brother was sleeping with Venetia whom I had left to guard him. Presently we were all in bed. In my sleep I thought I heard the baby cry. 'The darling!' I said, 'she hasn't eaten enough,' and leaning over the cradle I began nursing her. I was so tired I couldn't hold myself up, so I picked her up from the cradle and took her into my bed to nurse, and thus I fell asleep.

"It was dawn when I awoke. 'I had better put the baby back into its cradle,' I thought. When I went to lift it up, the baby was still. I awoke your father at

once. We opened its swaddling clothes and began to rub it. The child was dead.

"'Wife, you have smothered my child!' said your father, beginning to cry. I, too, cried and screamed aloud. Your father put his hand over my mouth.

"'Shut up! Why are you screaming, stupid?' he said roughly.

"May God forgive him, but that was the way he spoke to me, although in all the three years we had been married I had never had a cross word from him before.

"'What are you shouting about?' he went on. 'Do you want to rouse the neighborhood, and have everyone say that you drank too much last night, and then smothered your own child?'

"He was right. May the ground in which he lies be blessed by God! Had people known the truth, I should have had to hide myself in the bosom of the earth. But, after all, a sin is a sin. When the burial was over and we returned to our house I abandoned myself to my grief. I did not have to mourn in secret.

"'You are young, and you will have other children,' everyone told me. But time went on, and God sent us none. Then I said to myself: 'Divine Providence is punishing me because I proved incapable of guarding the child given to me.' I was ashamed to look at people, and I was afraid of your father. He pretended not to mind, and was always comforting me and keeping up

my spirits. After a year, however, he also became moody and silent.

"Three years went by—three years in which I did not relish a mouthful of food—three years of praying at all the shrines. Then you came, and I was thankful, but not satisfied. Your father wanted a little girl, and told me so one day.

" 'This child is welcome, Despenio, but I wanted a little girl,' he said.

"When your grandmother made her pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, I sent twelve shirts and three gold pieces by her, to procure a paper of forgiveness. And, indeed, the very month in which your grandmother returned from Jerusalem, Annio was conceived. Every little while, after that, I would call in the midwife: 'Come, mistress, come,' I would say, 'and see if it's going to be a girl.'

" 'Yes, indeed, it will be a girl. Don't you see that your clothes barely meet,' and I was mad with joy.

"When the child was born, and proved to be a little girl, my heart returned to its right place. We called her Annio, the name of the departed one, pretending that no one was missing from the home. 'I thank Thee, oh Lord!' I kept on saying, day and night. 'I thank Thee, I, the sinner, whose shame Thou hast lifted, whose sin Thou hast forgiven.' As for Annio, she became the apple of our eye, and you almost died of jealousy. Your father called you 'his slighted one,'

because I stopped nursing you too soon; and sometimes he scolded me because I neglected you. My heart ached for you, but I could not help it. I simply could not let Annio go from my arms, for fear that something might happen to her. And although your blessed father reproached me for neglecting you, he could not himself bear even to have a drop of rain fall on Annio.

"But the more we petted the darling child, the more sickly she became. You boys were rosy and lively and full of mischief. She was quiet, good, and ailing. One might have said that God had repented His gift to us. Seeing her so pale I could not help remembering the dead one, and the idea that I had killed her began to possess me once more. And then the second one died, too.

"Whoever has not tasted that sorrow, my son, cannot know the bitterness of the cup. Hope of having another there was none, since your father was dead. Had I not found a parent willing to give me his little girl, I should have fled away to the mountains. It is true that she did not prove to be good-natured; but so long as I had her and worked for her and took care of her, I felt her to be mine. I forgot the one I had lost, and my conscience was at peace. It is true she was a terrible trial to me, yet at the same time she was a consolation. The more I suffer and endure, the less God will punish me for the child I smothered. For this reason, don't ask

me to change Katerinio for a good-natured and clever child, and may my blessing be upon you."

"No, Mother, no!" I cried, interrupting her. "I ask for nothing. After all you've told me I beg you to forgive my unkindness. I promise you to love Katerinio as if she were my sister, and never again to say a disagreeable word to her."

"May the blessings of Christ and of the Virgin Mary be upon you!" Mother said, with a sigh. "You see my heart aches for the miserable child, and I don't want anyone to talk against her. God has willed it. Sinful and unworthy as I am, I have shouldered the burden and must carry it uncomplainingly."

This confession made a great impression on me. My eyes at last were opened, and I was able to understand many of my mother's actions which at times had appeared to be either sheer superstition, or the result of monomania. She was so simple, so virtuous, so God-fearing that her terrible misadventure had clouded her whole life. To be conscious of a sin, to feel the necessity of atonement, and at the same time the impossibility of atonement—what a terrible, what an unrelenting hell! For twenty-eight years the poor woman had been tormented, and had been unable to appease the pangs of conscience.

From the moment of hearing her sad story I concentrated all my efforts on lightening her sorrow. I tried to impress upon her the fact that her sin had been

unpremeditated and against her volition. I dwelt on the great mercy of God, and on His justice in judging us according to our thoughts and intentions. At times I believed my efforts to be crowned with a measure of success.

However, when, after another absence of two years, my mother came to visit me in Constantinople, I decided to do something more drastic for her. I had happened to meet the Patriarch, Joachim the Second, at the house of one of the most famous families of the town. One day when we two were walking alone in the pleasant shade of the garden, I revealed to him my mother's story, and implored his coöperation. His high position and supreme authority in religious matters must convince my mother of the absolution of her sin.

The venerable and never-to-be-forgotten old man, after praising my religious zeal, willingly promised me his aid. Soon afterwards I conducted my mother to the patriarchate, and presented her to His Holiness. The confession lasted a long time, and from his manner and gestures I realized that he had to bring to bear all the strength of his simple and forceful arguments to accomplish the result he desired.

My joy was indescribable. My mother took leave of the old Patriarch with expressions of gratitude, and left the patriarchate as happy and joyful as if a heavy stone had been lifted from her heart. When we reached her hotel, she took from her bosom a cross, a gift from

His Holiness, and kissed it. Her eyes fixed upon it, she became lost in thought.

"The Patriarch is a fine man," I said. "Don't you think so, Mother?"

She made no reply.

"Have you nothing to say, Mother?" I asked, with some hesitation.

"What can I say, my son," she answered absently. "The Patriarch is a wise and holy man. He knows the intentions and wishes of God. He can forgive the sins of the world—but what can I say? He is a celibate. He has never had children, and he cannot know what it is to kill one's baby."

Her eyes filled with tears, and I remained silent.

THE GOD-FATHER

By George Drosines

THE GOD-FATHER

I

THE christening of the child was to take place in the evening because the priest not only had to come from a neighboring village, but was busy harvesting his corn, and had no other time at his disposal.

From the little church we came down to the house of the child's parents, where a simple meal of cereals and vegetables awaited us. We were eight in all, the priest, the god-father, the child's parents, some relatives and I, a self-invited guest, anxious to witness a village christening.

The god-father, a fat peasant from a neighboring village, was quite well along in years, but still seemed youthful, with his red cheeks, and was most loquacious. He was one of the most respected landowners of the village and of the whole district, and as a mark of honor had been chosen selectman for many consecutive years. He sat by me at the round *tavla,* which served as table, and charmed me with his lively conversation, and his shrewd, unaffected remarks on many subjects.

"Has your honor been god-father to many children?"

he suddenly asked, wiping the wine from his moustache with the back of his hand.

"No, not once," I answered.

"Let me make a wish, then. May God help you to christen many, and may they all live to grow up and be prosperous,—but let them be either all boys, or all girls."

"Why that last?" I asked with some surprise.

"So that you may not bring misery into the world without your knowledge."

"But I don't understand. What difference will it make if they are of both sexes?"

"Ah! you may well ask me that."

I could not understand what he meant to imply. "I *am* asking you," I said.

"This is not the moment to tell you. We came here to talk of pleasant things—to have a good time," and to make good his words he began to sing the "Song of the Partridge" in his little old cracked voice. The host strummed an accompaniment on a home-made lyre.

"A little partridge bathed and played, in a cool, crystal stream,
But when I sang my song of love, she never answered me."

It was late at night when the god-father and I left the little farmhouse. The priest had already gone.

"Now, Uncle Nasso, you will tell me, won't you, why one should christen only boys or only girls, and not mix them up?"

"I shall be glad to, if you must know; though it always upsets me to tell that story. But never mind. My mistake may save others. Let's go yonder to the threshing floor and sit under the large pine tree. The clouds have stopped the wind tonight, and we sha'n't catch cold."

The threshing floor was dark and abandoned. Around us, among the dark corn-stacks, we could dimly see moving cattle, and in the silence of the night we could hear their tinkling bells even farther than we could see them. We sat on the ground and leaned against the thick trunk of the tree. The old man took the black monk's cap from his head and scratched his thick white hair. Then, in a low voice, he began to tell his story:

II

"A league from here, in the village of Galatsona lives Stathis Koutsonikolos. He is admitted to be the thriftiest and richest man in Galatsona. In Kamaria he has as much land as two yoke of oxen can plough in a day. Also he owns two hundred head of goats, so you can see how well off he is. God has blessed his household as He has blessed his fields. His wife, the pretty

Almond, gave him seven children, five boys and two girls. One of the girls I christened myself, and named her Taso, after my dear lamented sister. She was born in '60, and in '77 was like a peach tree in blossom. The Fates, who came three days after her birth, adorned her with all the graces of life. She was tall and slender, with eyes as black as the olives of Salona. Her eyebrows curved like scimitars, and her cheeks bloomed like full-colored pomegranates. The lads were mad over her, and the girls jealous. She was the first at every fair, and when I saw her, light and gay, leading every dance, I, swelled with pride, would take a silver necklace from my bag and throw it over her head crying, 'Health to you, my dashing Taso! May your god-father live long to enjoy the sight of you!'

"That fall I left our village and was gone for a few months. First I went to Xerochory to attend to some contracts; then to Chalkis to be witness at a trial. While I was there everyone said to me, 'Now that you are here, Uncle Nasso, why don't you go as far as Athens to see the great world, in your old age?' So to Athens I went. What houses! What streets! I wandered about the great place like a dog who has lost his master. Used to the mountains and to the mountain trails I could not help slipping on those smooth marble pavements. Those houses, higher even than our Mount Karababa in Chalkis, I thought might tumble on my bonnet any minute. My brain was spinning in its shell, so I says to myself:

'What business has the Fox in the market place?' So I packed and beat it for Chalkis. I reached there on the second day, and stayed for about a week with some people from my village, and after that took the road back home to Gerake. I got there in the evening, and the next morning who should come to see me but Stathis, my Taso's father, from Galatsona.

"'Welcome home!' says he.

"'Well met!' says I.

"He asked me first how I got along in my travels, and from one thing to another we got to talking about his affairs. 'While you were away, my old Nasso,' says he, 'great things have happened in my household.' His face was laughing. I could see he had some good news to tell.

"'What is tickling you?' I asked.

"'Well, Uncle Nasso, I have got your god-daughter engaged.'

"'That so? And to whom?'

"'To a handsome lad from beyond the border.'

"'Good luck to them, and a happy wedding day! And where did you happen to find the bridegroom, if I may ask? Is he new in our village?'

"'Yes. The Master brought him over as keeper for his olive orchards. From the first day Taso noticed him, and the boy was struck with her. I talked it over with the Master, who told me that he was a good boy, well-to-do, and from good people. At home he had a

quarrel with some one. He shot at him and wounded him, and had to leave Turkish soil and come over here. To make a long story short, the Master settled it all in a few days, and by Christmas the wedding will take place. They are a good match and love each other, Nasso. I'll send you the boy this evening to look over.' "

III

"At sunset my door opened, and in came a strapping youth of about twenty-five, fine looking, and with a black moustache. He knelt before me, kissed my hand, then sat beside me and we started chatting.

" 'My boy, what village do you come from?'

" 'I come from Promyri.'

" 'Indeed! I was there once. Let me see, that was about twenty-five years ago. I went there to buy a mare. Is Manolis, the miller, still living?'

" 'Why, he was my uncle. He died six years ago.'

" 'And his sister, Christo's widow?'

" 'She was my blessed mother.'

" 'What! You are her son. You don't say so. Why, I christened a child of hers.'

" 'So, we are relatives,' says he joyously. 'We'll be double relatives now.'

" 'My boy,' I said, 'tell me your name.'

" 'Yannios Zesis.'

" 'Then you are my god-child. You were just seven

days old, and dying. I happened to be there, and christened you. I never thought you would live to become such a strapping lad.'

"The boy was delighted. Once more he took my hand and kissed it. 'It was good luck,' says he, 'for my Taso and me to have the same god-father. Now you must also be my best man.'

"For a spell I had forgotten that Taso was my god-daughter. When he spoke of it, something like a black cloud covered my mind.

" 'Listen, Yannios, I can't be your best man, and you can't have Taso for your wife, either. Don't you see, you are both my god-children. That makes you brother and sister.'

"Had a thunderbolt struck Yannios he could not have looked worse. He was pale as a wax taper. The blood seemed to have left his veins. 'Not marry Taso?' he cried. 'Is this the time to tell me that? I wouldn't be honest to drop her now.'

" 'And you'll be damned forever if you marry your sister.'

"He began to cry, that big strapping giant of a boy—to cry like a baby. My heart was aching for him, but what could I do? Fate had written it so.

"Yannios got up and wiped his eyes. His face had changed, and he looked like a madman. 'Whatever I do, god-father, don't curse me,' he said, as he opened the door and went from my sight. I did not close my eyes

all night long. I kept thinking of that look on Yannio's face, and of his last words. An evil foreboding was in my heart. Just before daybreak I heard the dog bark. Someone was coming. Then someone was knocking at the door.

"'Who is there?' I asked, springing up from my mat.

"'It's me, Yannios!' said a hoarse voice.

"'What do you want here, at such an hour, my boy?'

"'Open, god-father, open!'

"I unlocked the door and he came in. The dim light from the embers of the fire fell on him. What a look! I shall never forget it. His eyes bulged out as if he were a killed lamb.

"'If I can't have her, then no one else shall have her, either, and I won't let her live in the village, jilted!' He spoke as if talking to himself.

"'What are you saying, my boy? Of whom are you speaking?' I cried, the shivers running up and down my spine.

"'Of Taso. I have killed her!' He showed the rifle he was holding in his hand.

"I stood there like a piece of stone. My voice stuck in my throat. I could neither see nor hear. Then I dropped in a heap on the chest. As if in a dream I heard Yannios' last words to me:

"'Good-bye to you, god-father. Never ask about me again. Some day a bullet will get me, too.'

"He told the truth. Nothing was heard of him for

a year. Then word came that he had been killed in Makrynitsa."

IV

The old peasant rose, covered his head with his black cap, and said: "You have learned what you wanted to know. Now, good-night to you."

I did not move from my place, neither did I return his salutation. In my mind I could see enacted on the earth's infinite stage, the village tragedy which the old selectman had related to me while my eyes followed his white shadow fading gradually into the darkness of the night.

MANGALOS

By Gregorios Xenopoulos

MANGALOS

It was an afternoon in summer time. I was about twelve years old, and was playing with my brother and my sisters in the garden when we heard noises and murmurs from the street.

"That must be crazy Costas," I said, ready to run.

"It may be the clown!" said my brother more hopefully, though ready to follow me.

"And what if it is a runaway ox?" suggested my sister. "You'd better wait."

We could now hear the barking of dogs and cries of fear. Whenever an ox escaped either from Hammos' slaughter house or from the wharfs of Marine Street where the ships from Morea unloaded their cargoes, the street was not safe; so instead of running out of doors we rushed upstairs and looked out of one of the windows of our living room.

The street was in uproar; men and women, hurried by curiosity, were running from the streets nearby to see what was up. People came out of the shops, houses, and taverns. The windows were crowded with wondering girls' heads; old women stood in the doorways, and the children of the neighborhood were watching eagerly from the street corners, ready to run back to shelter.

"What is it? What is it, my son?"

"Just what is the matter, good Christians?"

Something was coming from far away, from Hammos. A big and strange parade. At the head of it came "the little fish," street urchins, dirty and ragged, jumping with excitement as they turned back to look at the sight. Then came an empty space and then a lot of people, a great dark crowd, which jammed the whole width of the street and seemed to have no end. In the middle of the empty space, nearer to the urchins than to the crowd behind, we saw a man, the hero of this parade. As soon as we caught sight of him, even before we learned who he was, we felt a cold shiver of fear. Had it been an ox we could never have been moved so much. Wrapped in a white woolen peasant cape, though it was in the heart of the summer, with new highland shoes, and a worn-out pair of trousers, he walked, thin and tall and pale—like a ghost. With coal-black beard and long, curly, thick hair that seemed never to have had any dealings with a comb, and was covered with a piece of black cloth bound into a cap, the man was advancing with the queerest step one could imagine. Had he been a crazy drunkard, he would never walk that way. You might have thought his shoes—the only new article he was wearing—stepped for the first time on the stone pavement of the street, or that the street was scattered, here and there, with burning coals which he was trying to avoid. He was going now this way and now that,

mostly sideways. He would sometimes take a step back and dive into the air just as a poor diver might jump into the sea. Hop! Hop! For a moment he would lean over as if he were about to fall, but with a movement of his arm which he thrust from the cape, he would recover his balance and make an abrupt sideward move. I believe the empty space about him was left because of his irregular walk. Without meaning to, he kept the people away from him; and the children from the street corners stepped back toward the wall as he passed them in mortal fear that he might fall on them.

He spoke no word and looked at nobody and at nothing. His eyes, small and black, like lights that had gone out, were fixed on empty space. One could hear the shouts of the men running ahead to get a glimpse of him, and the general hubbub that rose from the distant crowd, making a long train behind him, and mingled with the barking of the dogs. The urchins ahead of him and the people that were behind and next to him were serious and silent, and their silence—I might almost say respect—made his passing even more mysterious. If he were crazy or drunk, the urchins would surely pest him and jeer at him. If he were a bandit, a runaway, or a criminal, that Hammos gang, who were so proud of their strength, would have caught him. What in the world could this man be, and why was he followed by this crowd?

A boy walking behind him was carrying a big pack

of clothes and blankets of a faded color, bound with an old rope. At the boy's side and at the head of the serious looking escort, I saw Yannes Mangalos, our good neighbor, the butcher, who was the father of Mary, my girl-friend of my own age. He was talking in a low voice to his companions and gesticulating with excitement while he often pointed at the strange man. It was evident that Yannes Mangalos, the father of my little girl-friend, was very much moved. His round, ruddy face seemed to me to have lost its color, but I could not say whether it showed joy, astonishment, worry, sorrow, anger or fear. Everything at that hour seemed to me strange and unexplainable. I was eagerly listening for the word that would explain it all.

At last, I heard it. As the tall man with the cape passed our window, and we were watching him from behind, we were struck with the appearance of his shoulders, which seemed to be of different height. Just then, Taso, the weaver woman, who lived across the street and had two great eyes that made me always afraid, raised her voice and spoke plainly and clearly to another woman neighbor.

"Isn't he Constantine, the brother of Mangalos, who has spent, oh my eyes! fifteen years in prison for killing Kalligeros?"

"Bah! Bah!" exclaimed the other woman, "and today, my son, his term has come to an end and he is out again!"

"Sure enough! Free again!"

At that moment the crowd turned left at the first corner, which in our neighborhood was known as Mangalos' corner, because the Mangalos home was there. Those who found room slipped behind Constantine and his brother. The others were jammed at the crossing, pushing each other and standing on tiptoe to see how the man just freed would step on the threshold of his home after fifteen years in prison. There was some good reason for the curiosity of the crowd that had rushed to the place to see this sight. In truth, it was something one could not see every day!

Now that we had found out the cause of it all and felt sure that we were not running any risk with lion or ox, we ran downstairs and mingled with the crowd. We had enough courage then to slip between the big men's legs and to reach Mangalos' home, but mother interferred with our intentions and sent the servant to pick us up.

I don't remember whether I learned Constantine Mangalos' story on that day or later. But I will tell it to you as I know it.

He was twenty-five years old before he got into trouble, a fine man and a butcher by trade, like his brother. As most people were in Zante, at that time, he was a devoted radical and a blind follower of Lombardos, the leader of his party. Lombardos was then in

all his glory and the people's idol, the object of their worship. They had him for a second god and sang about him:

"Lombardos mine, your way may lead
Through lovely meadows green,
And may you feed your riding horse,
In fields of royal mint.

"I wish the hills might stoop for me,
To see the town of Athens,
And hear my own Lombardos speak,
Before the people's fathers."

But the much beloved Lombardos had an enemy. Rather, many enemies, I should say; for the party of nobles was not small even at that time. But one was counted above all the others; Kalligeros, a lawyer and a journalist, a man with good brains and with a strong and fearless pen. He had a paper of his own and in its columns he knocked relentlessly at Lombardos and his party. Of course, the followers of Lombardos struck back often, either with their leader's pen or with some hired man's club. Sometimes with both. But the ear of Kalligeros "would not sweat to anything" and he continued to wage war. One Sunday morning, his paper came out with a terrible article, the worst of all. It must have contained some great truth or some great lie

because Lombardos himself was deeply hurt, and not only was he hurt—which might have happened more than once—but he showed it, too. His followers saw him sad that day and heard him say a few angry words. One of them, whether really angry or anxious to display his loyalty, dropped a word in the leader's parlor.

"That scoundrel needs killing!"

Did Lombardos hear this? Or was he too troubled to hear what had been said? Nobody knows. But, it seems, he said nothing. Neither *yes* nor *no*. Or if he did say a few words later, the usual ones, to calm down the spirits of his men—for he always liked to mix a little water with the wine of his followers—Constantine Mangalos had not heard them. He had already rushed out of the parlor beside himself.

"Where are you going, fellow?" asked his friend Klapatsas, the pet of the Hammos gang, who met him in the hall.

"Let me go, damn him!" Constantine roared and ran down the stairs as if he was chased by somebody. His friend Klapatsas followed him.

This had happened Sunday noon. On the same day, Kalligeros was found dead. At midnight, as he was going home from the club, three shots were fired at him. The assassination stirred up all the island of Zante. It caused so much sensation that the authorities were obliged to hunt up the assassins with unusual zeal and actually to arrest them—a very rare event in those

days of party terror. They proved to be Constantine Mangalos and his friend Klapatsas. They were betrayed by a woman who had seen and recognized them. At the end they confessed themselves. The trial was quick and short. They were hit hard; fifteen years for the one and ten for the other. Lombardos was unwilling to do anything in their behalf and he did not even try to influence the agents of justice, for fear of his enemies who had spread the rumor that he had set these men to kill Kalligeros. Mangalos, however, declared before the court in plain words that he had not been influenced by anyone, that he had been actuated only by his own feelings and that he had alone come to the conclusion to offer himself "as a sacrifice." For it had made a terrible impression on him to see Lombardos, his god, made miserable because of Kalligeros and his article. He also said that he had influenced his friend Klapatsas to help him in the crime of revenge. This explanation, coming with all sincerity from an otherwise blameless man whose feelings, stirred up by his faith in his ideal, had made him a criminal in an unlucky hour, not only cleared Lombardos from all suspicion but it lightened the position of Mangalos himself. It was his confession and no influence from the party leader that induced the court to impose a lenient sentence on him. But his fifteen years were spent in the dark prison without a single day's grace; and when the last day had come, his brother Yannes went to pay

all his expenses before they could set him free. So we saw him suddenly in that summer afternoon, returning to his father's home to start life again.

Start life again! Easily said! But is it so easy for a man who has been shut up in a prison from the twenty-fifth to the fortieth year of his life to make a new beginning? Constantine Mangalos had even forgotten how a man walks! Had we not seen him? A crazy drunkard would never walk that way!

From our attic window we could see a back window of Mangalos' home opening on their small yard, which was surrounded by a high and blackened old wall. At that window I happened to see Mangalos again, about five or six days afterward. He was sitting before the window, leaning his hands on the bare sill and looking at something in front of him, fixedly and persistently. As my eyes lighted suddenly on his bare head and his pale face, which appeared small under his thick long hair, I was frightened and drew back. Then I peeped out again with some hesitation, and when I became sure that he would not move his glance from the one point, I took courage to watch him.

The more I watched him the more I wondered.

I was still a child but somehow I could tell one crime from another. The man who had killed in a moment of deep feeling, without interest or hatred, could never be for me like the ordinary "terrible criminal" or "bloody robber." In my child's conscience, even with-

out knowing the terminology, I could distinguish a *political* crime from a common one. But a murderer was always a murderer and I could not help feeling the horror of it. Then there were the angry criticisms of other people, the aversion and horror of the neighbors, the fear and terror of women and children. Once I had heard a woman neighbor saying to my mother: "The criminal, the scoundrel, who blackened the honorable name of Mangalos! Why couldn't they let him die in bonds, my lady? Why have they let him out and brought him here in the midst of us? We can't be safe even in our homes now! Who knows what bad things he will manage to do again? God preserve us, my lady, from such men!"

All this impressed me greatly. In my imagination, the ex-convict was unlike any of us. He must be a bad man and one must see his bad character painted on his very face. For that reason the more I looked at him the more I wondered. No trace of such bad character, no trace of inner ugliness could be seen on that pale face, with its unkempt hair and beard; nothing but the misery of a long imprisonment. On the contrary, I could detect a strange beauty, almost a saintly look, something noble and sad and martyr-like on his features, and above all, in his dark eyes that seemed lost in dreams under their care-blackened eyelashes.

It may seem strange but I must say it: In the chapel of our neighborhood, by the right post of the Holy

Gate, there was a picture of the beheading of St. John. I could remember distinctly the head of John, the Forerunner, as it lay on a plate held by a soldier. It was pale, sad, and hairy. I was reminded most vividly of this head when I saw Constantine Mangalos leaning on his window. In my imagination I saw iron bars as I had often seen them in prison windows. That man still seemed to me a prisoner even in his own house. I saw him in the midst of a martyrdom cleansing him of his crime in this world and I could not help thinking of him as of a repentant sinner. Unexpectedly and unwillingly, I began from that day on to feel sorry for him and to sympathize with him.

For a moment only he turned his eyes towards me but did not see me. Then he withdrew, and as I could not see him any longer, I left the attic.

Next day I heard terrible things. Mangalos was altogether beside himself. At night, they said, he saw ghosts, sprang wild and terrified from his bed, aroused his household, stirred up the neighborhood, and acted like mad. Striding up and down the house he shouted "War is coming!" with a wild voice that made everybody shudder. Paraskeve, the wife of his brother, Yannes, was afraid he might strangle them some night and demanded of her husband that they should move from the house. Yannes persuaded her to be patient for a few days by telling her that it was all the result of the prison and that when Constantine became accus-

tomed to the house and his freedom he would gradually calm down.

But no improvement took place! Every day he became worse. It was impossible for anyone to live with him. Since half of the house belonged to him, Yannes had neither the right nor the desire to make him leave it, and so, after five days' troubles and vain hopes, he decided to take his wife and children and to seek a home elsewhere. The madman was left alone in the deserted Mangalos home to shout "War—is coming!" all night, without bothering anyone except his nearest neighbors.

I heard this with considerable regret because, as I have already said, Yannes Mangalos had a daughter of my own age, who was my friend. Her name was Mary and she often came to our garden where we christened my sister's dolls and built houses with mud. I could not find any more pleasure in these plays but I did like to sit near my little blonde friend, who was plump and had a light and fresh complexion. Her voice, too, had a long, caressing drawl that I can hear even now. Especially when she said "Give it to me-eee." And I did give it to her, whatever it was, which made my sister very jealous. But now, for the madman's sake, I had to lose my friend. Here was ample reason for me to hate him as the whole neighborhood did.

Still, I could see no evil on his face! I would often watch him, with his dreamy eyes, as he leaned from his

own little window, and every time I saw him I was more convinced of his likeness to St. John, and my confidence in him grew stronger and stronger. Perhaps I was the only child in our neighborhood who was not afraid of the wild man. One day I even spoke to him, and nodded when I thought he was looking my way. This made him fix his eyes on me with curiosity and astonishment, and some sign of pleasure, too. Mustering more courage, and I called out to him:

"Good day, Constantine! How are you? How are you getting along?"

He looked at me for a while again and then he asked with a grimace that bore a very faint resemblance to a smile:

"Is this Glegorakis?"

That he should know my name impressed me very much, for I knew he was in prison when I was born.

"Yes," I said. "How do you know me?"

"Well," he answered with a more pronounced smile, "how could I help knowing the little master?" I had forgotten that I was the little master of our neighborhood. The compliment was just as flattering to me as my greeting was flattering to Constantine, and from that moment we became friends.

My mother encountered me as I was coming down from the attic with:

"Were you speaking with Mangalos, the madman? Don't let me catch you doing it again! Do you hear?"

I answered no word to Mother. Secretly I promised myself to disobey her. On the following days I could not catch Mangalos at his back window. It seemed that he spent his time shut in the house or before his front window. Besides, I had heard someone say that a newly-wed woman who happened to be passing with her husband around Mangalos' corner almost fainted when she saw the madman with the wild hair hanging from the lower window. I laughed at the picture, but on the same night I had reason to be frightened a little myself by the same madman.

I woke up just before daybreak and in the quiet of the night, I heard strange voices. I soon knew it was Mangalos, who was up again in mad excitement shouting his usual alarm:

"War—is coming!"

I heard his footsteps as he walked back and forth in his house. Now and then their irregular sounds stopped and his shrill voice was heard above everything. When he had done shouting, he resumed his endless walk. His phrase was pronounced in two different tones. First, he uttered a wild, quick, and sudden shout, like a command:

"War!"

Then, after a pause, followed a calmer, deeper, and lower sound:

"Is coming!"

And immediately the walk was resumed.

It seemed to me the madman was very near, almost outside of the half-opened window of my room. I was so frightened that I sprang up in my nightshirt, ran into my mother's room and woke her up.

"Listen, Mother!"

"What is it?" she asked, frightened out of her sleep.

"Mangálos, the madman! Can you hear him?"

She listened silently for a while, then she made the sign of the cross with a passing expression of pity, and pretending to be angry, said to me:

"*You* had better hear him since you like to talk with him. Only keep quiet; you might wake up the children."

I shut my window and went to bed again; but I could not close my eyes. As I heard the madman's voice and pictured in my mind his dark and wild face, his black hair and beard, his ascetic figure, and his excited movements, I was mortally afraid he might at any moment come out, walk over the tiles of the roof and appear at the window, nodding to me like a ghost. . . .

At last he became silent and quiet again. The dawn was just breaking with a rosy streak when I fell asleep, not before I had promised myself a thousand times that I would never again speak to him. I decided that night, if not to hate him, at least to be afraid of him as all others were. But it so happened that three days went by before I could see him or hear his voice again. It

seemed that the freed ex-convict had passed the critical stage of his excitement . . . war and everything else. I forgot all my promises and regained my old confidence, so that when I saw him again one afternoon from the window of our attic I greeted him and asked him how he was.

"How could I be?" he answered in bitter melancholy. "I am thirsty and have no water to drink!" And he turned over his earthen water-jar to show it was empty. I knew that his brother sent him food every day and I asked again:

"The boy brings you food, doesn't he bring you water, too?"

"He does but I drink it too soon. It is so warm. Once more not a drop is left. How can I get any? You know I cannot go out myself."

"Why?"

Constantine condescended to answer a child's candor:

"Because I am still a prisoner. Perhaps the men have let me free but He who is high up hasn't forgiven me yet."

He turned his head towards the sky exactly like the head I had seen painted in the church. His words and his motion made me shudder—I remember that very well. What could a child say to that? So I turned back to the water.

"Why don't you ask from some of the women neighbors?"

"Ah," he answered with an expression of contempt, "one cannot expect anything from them!"

I understood his meaning well, and I thought of him in all his loneliness and abandonment, banned from all society and avoided by everyone, like a man stricken with leprosy or pestilence. He was thirsty! One could see from his pale and parched lips that he was thirsty! And it was so warm! Just then a fine impulse came to me and I called out to him:

"Just wait a minute! I'll bring you some water!"

I ran down the double stairway, rushed into the kitchen, seized a tin can, filled it with water from our jar, and, before anyone could see me and hold me back, I was out on the street. Running as fast as I could without spilling the water, I turned Mangalos' corner.

"Where are you going with it?" asked Mrs. Mantalena, my first teacher, from her window.

"To Mangalos," I answered without stopping, "he asked me for some water."

A good-looking girl, who was living in a single story house next to Mangalos' home, heard my words, looked at me with wonder in her black eyes and whispered:

"He will strangle you!"

Without stopping I answered with a nod. There was no fear of such a thing happening. Yet I was really afraid and almost regretted my rashness. What if, at the moment he should stretch his hands to take hold of the tin can, he should seize me by the neck?

But it was too late to turn back. I would be ashamed to face the black eyes of that girl, who would laugh at me. Let anything happen—anything! With a heart beating fast, I passed his door and hurried to climb the stairs.

As soon as he heard my steps, Mangalos hastened out to the top of the stairs. He came down one or two steps and before I was halfway up, tall as he was, he leaned over and grasped the can. As if in a dream, I waited for him. He went in, emptied the water into his jar, came back and handed the can back to me.

His face now was actually lighted by a smile. Oh, that smile! It seemed to me that it lighted the stairway, the whole deserted gloomy house, his black hair, and even his soul to its very depths—and my own soul!

"I thank you!" he said with a loud voice.

"Never mind!" I whispered and fled running, rejoicing and proud.

The beautiful girl was still in the same place. Without stopping I cast an arrow at her:

"Did he strangle me now?"

"Well," answered my charming mocker, with a graceful nod of her head, "why couldn't you wait a minute?"

True, I had not waited very long. All I took time to see of Mangalos, on whom for the first time I had looked closely, was his smile—and his hands. Probably the fear for my neck had made me pay attention to the latter. His arms were bare to the elbows, and his hands

were thin and white. I was surprised that his arms were not tattooed with sea-gorgons and double-headed eagles and daggers, for I knew this to be the brave custom of all prisoners. I had expected that Mangalos, who had been fifteen years in prison, would have at least one gorgon on each hand, like Nasos, the tavern-owner, who had not been in prison more than fifteen months.

But it seems that the murderer of Kalligeros had not lived in prison like an ordinary prisoner. Later, when he had become accustomed to his new condition of freedom, a condition he was unable to realize at first, when the ghosts left him, and his conscience stopped bothering him, when he stopped screaming his terrible "War —is coming!" and had become more peaceful and more human, he actually went as far as to hum a song. Now and then I heard him. His song was slow, monotonous, low, and broken by long pauses like the tune of an organ with many silent notes. One day I listened to catch the words. It was not the ordinary prisoner's song:

"The bonds of prison are for men. . . ."

nor anything like it. He was singing a church hymn! The poor man had "turned his heart to God." His favorite reading, as he told me later himself, was "Sinner's Salvation" and the "Lives of the Saints." I felt sure, too, although my information had not come

from him, that he spent his mornings and evenings in long prayers of worship and tears. He was asking God to free him as men had already freed him.

A child's instinct is never wrong! Constantine Mangalos was just what he had appeared to me to be from the beginning, a repentant sinner. This confinement in his own house and self-inflicted prolongation of his imprisonment, even his abstinence from work was not merely due to his unfamiliarity with people, freedom and work. He was still feeling his sin deep in his soul, and was anxious to purge it through self-inflicted punishment. He lived like a monk or an ascetic. Gradually his head began to lose its likeness to St. John's head, because he got into the habit of trimming his hair and beard and even of combing them at times. Slowly and steadily he was becoming a man again.

A year went by. The neighbors had now become accustomed to the ex-convict and had ceased talking too much about him. Besides, Constantine was not disturbing or frightening them any longer. Even his hymn singing was in a very low voice. He might spend his whole life without making his presence felt to anyone. I could carry on my conversation with him from the window of our attic without provoking a scolding on my mother's part. But his brother, Yannes, was not of the same opinion. He believed this state of affairs could not go on forever and insisted that Constantine should start work. He had to earn his living and to pay back

the debt his brother had incurred for his sake. Yannes himself had a whole family to support. Yet, he had managed with borrowing and begging to pay all his brother's expenses in prison and now, on top of it all, he had been forced to leave his own home and to pay rent. How could he stand all this?

But Constantine paid no attention at first:

"They say I've got to work," he told me one day as we had our usual talk. "Am I now in condition to work? Look at me. What work could I do? Butcher again? No! Never!"

The expression on his face showed that he utterly abhorred all killing, even of animals. Pure sentimentality! It was clear, the man was not in his senses.

But one day a strange revolution took place in him. Lombardos, his old leader, had come to Zante, a minister now! There were bells ringing and guns booming, and applause, and cheers! The whole city was up. A great procession was formed and passed through Hammos, and the shouts could be heard very clearly in Mangalos' home. I saw him again from the window in our attic. He was very pale and his dark eyes were shining with anger. His face reminded me of the first days he had spent out of prison. I was afraid he had turned mad again for good.

"Honor and glory for him!" he said to me with fury. "And I, who have sacrificed myself for his love, what good am I getting now from it? What good?"

He had no more love for Lombardos. He regretted his blind fanaticism and the crime that had been the result of it. He saw clearly how he had wronged himself by having once devoted himself to the worship of a man who had nothing in common with him. His love for Lombardos had made a god of a man for him, and for his sake he had forgotten the heavenly God and His commandments, he thought. So, on the very next day, he decided to start work!

This, I believe, was not entirely unrelated to the shock caused by the ovation given to Lombardos, the man who was still the people's idol, while Mangalos had become their laughing stock. At that time I could not explain this sudden change. But now I understand it perfectly and I take this turn in the martyred man's life to be one of its most moving points.

Even a great surprise was for me the incident which I will tell you now before coming to an end.

Constantine Mangalos was again a butcher, or, to be more exact, a "meat dealer." Since he could not "shed blood" himself, he would call on Klapaftes, a young man in his neighborhood who was also a butcher, peddling his meat from house to house, and let him slaughter one or two lambs for him daily. Then he would trim them himself in his own yard and carry them on his shoulders to the end of the street opposite our house, where he would sell them in front of a small low-class barber-shop's entrance, half of which had been

rented to him, and there he would sit waiting for customers, especially from among the peasants who frequented the barber-shop. At any rate, he would manage to sell one or two lambs each day. On Sundays, as many as four.

But what happened one day? Mangalos had left a live lamb in his house tied in his room near the back window. Klapaftes was to slaughter it the next day. The lamb, after eating all the hay that was laid on the window-sill, climbed upon it, and as it tried to walk it slipped and was hung outside the window from the rope it was tied to, which was rather long. His bleatings of despair brought our servant to the window of our attic which saw the misfortune and began crying:

"Mangalos' lamb is hung! It will be strangled! Poor thing!"

Sister and I heard it and rushed to the window of our parlor, from which we could see the barber-shop across the street. Mangalos was sitting there keeping the flies away from his goods with a paper brush. But it was rather far, and since he could not hear our voice we made signs to him. At last he caught sight of us and looked astonished. What could we want of him? He got up and started toward us. (His walk had now become more natural and the street did not seem to be covered with burning coals.) When he had reached the middle of the street, he could hear us.

"Quick! Your lamb is hanging from the window. It will be strangled!"

"Oh, bad luck!" exclaimed the butcher, and ran towards his house.

I went down to the street and followed him, anxious to see the end of the white lamb that was hanging there. Would he be able to save it?

We arrived almost at the same time. Constantine unlocked his door and went up the stairs in big strides. I followed behind. But we could not hear the bleating any longer. When Constantine had pulled the rope he saw he had before him what seemed like a carcass. He acted like a madman.

"Gone! Dead! . . . Bad luck! . . . Just wait. It's breathing still! . . . Its heart is beating! . . . It may come to with rubbing. . . . Let me open its mouth. . . ."

But with all the rubbing and the blowing into its mouth and shaking the lamb did not show any signs of coming to.

"It will die! It will be a dead lamb!" said Constantine with despair. "Two dollars gone! What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Kill it!" I advised him.

"True! There is no other way!"

He ran like a crazy man to the door and yelled:

"Klapafte! Ho, Klapafte!"

No answer.

"He is out!" said a woman's voice from the next house.

"The devil!"

He came up again, a picture of hopelessness. A moment more and the lamb would be a carcass to be thrown away. What could he do?

"Kill it!" I said again. "What are you waiting for?"

"Me? Oh, my God! My God!"

He raised his eyes towards the blue sky that could be seen from the open window, stretched out his arms, sighed two or three times, and put his hands on his head. Then he took out his knife and knelt over the dying lamb.

It was done.

From that day on Constantine Mangalos killed and sold his own lambs. The man had come to his senses again.

FORGIVENESS

By Iakovos Polylas

FORGIVENESS

"There shall be neither temple without altar nor human being without mercy."
—Phokion in Stoboeus I, 31.

ANASTASES, an eighty-year-old man, was found dead at the foot of Dark Mountain about half an hour's walk from his village. He was carried home by his only daughter, Irene, his sister, Helen, and his old friend, Charalampos. Next morning, at sunrise, they buried him, the priest of the chapel of the Annunciation accompanying the dead man to his grave. No other Christian man attended him except Charalampos, and the old attendant of the church. They carried the coffin, and they dug the grave in the church according to the practice of that time in the town and country of Corfu.

One evening, soon afterwards, Charalampos entered the wine-shop of his neighborhood, said "good evening" to five or six men seated over their cups, took his seat in a corner and ordered a cup of wine. A lively conversation was going on and Charalampos could not help listening.

"Surely," said one, "Nicholas' son, Charidemos, will now marry Irene."

"He wooed her four years ago. The girl was willing but the father refused to listen."

"I was just going to say that myself. As long as Anastases lived, the marriage could not take place. The old man was afraid to have Charidemos for a son-in-law because he had lent his father, Nicholas, a few dollars, and later he piled high interest on interest, brought law-suits against him and ended by seizing Nicholas' own vineyard and home."

"You aren't right about the home; that was always left in the possession of Charidemos."

"True, but the old man had no good intentions about it. Poor Nicholas had to promise to pay him a barrel of oil yearly for that old home."

"Oil? How could he squeeze oil out of stones?"

"The old fox had his nets well set. He foresaw that Nicholas would never be able to pay it. How could he? Had the old sinner lived one year longer, Nicholas would have lost his home and every one of the few olive trees left him on the hillside. Three barrels were already due him."

"Everything will be all right now, with the marriage. Charidemos will get back his own estate and all of Anastases' property in addition to the heiress. God is just."

"There will be no marriage. How can Charidemos

wed the girl now? His father charged him on his death-bed never to marry her. His last words were: 'Charidemos, if you ever marry Irene, my curse will be on you!' "

"But Charidemos is willing to, just the same."

"Yes, but how about his mother? She keeps reminding him of his father's last words and the poor boy is broken-hearted and hasn't even the courage to walk near Irene's home."

"Well, the old father never knew the young people had an understanding. Her aunt told me they were secretly engaged. One day Irene came down at the usual time to unsaddle her father's horse and water it, when all of a sudden Charidemos jumped the fence and with pretended force kissed her in the presence of two of his friends as witnesses."

"A kissed girl can never marry another man."

"Isn't this God's mystery? The old miser, when he lived, ruined other people's homes; now, when he is dead, he is ruining his own."

"A bad man he was."

"Do you remember year before last when he was collecting his interest, how he grinned with his black toothless gums, and he complained that our crops were weevilly?"

"People's misfortunes were his joys. He simply longed to see poor men starve so that they might come to him and beg him for a loan."

"Andronicos—God rest his soul—treated him right."

"Yes, I remember; the covetous old man brought a suit against Andronicos for a debt he had already paid. The poor man had neither a written receipt nor witnesses, and before the judge Anastases, the old scoundrel, laid his dirty hand on the Holy Bible and took a false oath."

"I was just going to say that. Then, when he threatened to put the man in jail for a paid debt, Andronicos was so enraged that he put a pullet in him."

"What good did that do? They say the bullet cured the old man instead of killing him."

"Yes, no one could locate the bullet, but the doctors said that it had helped in healing an inner wound which often made him spit blood. Poor Andronicos was sentenced for life and died an unjust death after two years in prison. But the old robber, who was born three days before the devil, lived too well for another twenty years. Thou art great, O Lord, and marvelous are Thy works! Surely God kept him in the world to torment good Christians."

There was silence for a few moments.

Charalampos sat sipping his wine and smoking his pipe. He was not sure whether he should leave the place or take part in the conversation, when the oldest man in the company, who had been silent until then, spoke to him.

"Well, Charalampos, haven't you anything to tell us?"

"I have been listening all the time," answered Charalampos, "and I said to myself that you don't talk like good Christians on this Sabbath eve. Tomorrow we will hear the gospel, and the word of truth."

"Do you think, then, we have been telling lies?"

"I doubt whether everything you said was true. I only want to say that even if Anastases had been as crooked as you picture him, you should not talk so cruelly about him just after his death. If he was wrong in treating living men unjustly, you, too, are wrong in speaking ill of a dead man who cannot answer you from where he is now."

"It wasn't passion that made us talk that way. None of us here has been his victim. We didn't need his help. But we can't help sympathizing with the poor men he robbed. He surely was bloodthirsty."

"There is something in Charalampos' stand," said the oldest of the company again, "Anastases saved him from death once."

"That was the only good act in all his life."

"Well, then," said Charalampos, encouraged a little by this turn, "you see for yourselves. The man was not so bad. There was some goodness left in him, just as any good man can't help being a little bad, once in a while. Perhaps God created him better. Do you know how he was made so heartless? You, young men, don't know his story, but I can tell you."

"Well, let us hear it while we wait."

"This poor Anastases was just four years old when he lost his father, and two or three years after that he lost his mother, too. His trustee, a distant uncle, took the orphan to his home and treated him worse than a bad step-father. For the least of causes he would beat him black and blue."

"I suppose he was a crook before he was born."

"The trustee was unscrupulous and made up his mind to strip his nephew of his property. He began by stealing everything that could be found in the orphan's home. As such trifles as old troughs and mouldy barrels could not satisfy him very well, he adopted another scheme. He abolished all the old landmarks of the estate left in his trust, changed the position of the original fence that separated his land from his nephew's, and built a new dividing line which left his ward only a few strips of land on the edges. In other words, he disinherited him and left him destitute."

"Crookedness runs in the family, it seems."

"At that time the English needed men to build those famous castles of theirs on the island of Vidos. They paid them well and so they attracted a number of orphans from our village. Anastases was among them. After two years of hard work he came back with a little money."

"He had his first earnings from foreigners."

"No, from his own labor. With this money he built

his first house, which is now an abandoned ruin. He had learned to be a mason during the two years. He furnished his home and married an orphan girl for a wife, without any dowry. He had two children, Irene, who still lives, and my own little godson, Soteres. Then his wife died and he was left alone to bring up two children, the boy four years old, the girl, five. He had to live by himself."

"Why didn't he marry another wife?"

"I urged him to. But he said he didn't want any step-mother for his children. He would rather suffer than lose them. He was a brave man. I remember still how at summer he would start out two hours before daybreak. He would place his children, two little angels, in a bag with two or three pounds of plain foodstuff, hang a flask of wine from his neck, take his pick in one hand and the bag over his shoulder with the other, and walk for a whole hour to go to the great woods near the main village. Here he sweated the whole day in the sun, cutting down wood from mastick-bushes, holm-oaks, and mountain-strawberry trees to make charcoal. When he had piled up enough wood to start his kiln, he would stay up all night and keep his children out there, too. Sometimes he would leave half-burned wood or finished charcoal in the pit, and yet nobody would touch them out of pity for him. Would you believe it?"

"He was very prompt in showing pity to others in return, wasn't he?"

"He spent five years of such labor just to keep himself and his children alive."

"Why didn't he go to work for others as we have done?"

"In those days, even counting the low cost of living, wages were too low, and he was too proud to work for others. He was a good, honest, hard-working man with a high spirit who could not stand the whims of an employer. Besides, he did not want to part with his children or to trust them to the care of any relatives. After what he had suffered at his uncle's hands he had no faith in any kinsman."

"How did he become a rich man after such misery?"

"I never heard of a man getting rich from charcoal."

"They say he found treasure in the ruins of the old castle near Gardiki. The spirit Moros showed him the place."

"Foolish gossip," said Charalampos. "His treasure was his labor and his economy. Besides, God had made him very strong. He could work eighteen hours a day. In winter he would work nights, too. He could weave the best baskets and make the best wearing bags, though he had never been in a factory. Then he thought of another plan. In summer, he would sell just enough charcoal to provide for the absolute necessities of himself and his children. The greater part he would store in his house to sell in winter when coal sold much higher. By these methods he saved considerable money."

"That doesn't make any difference. He may have come honestly by it but he used it dishonestly when he ruined so many poor men with it."

"I told him many times so much usury on his loans was a sin and made people hate him. But he had his own opinion. He would say to me 'Charalampos, I have known want of food and of clothes ever since my early years. I cannot forget it. My childhood was spent in misery. I don't want to go through it again in my old age. I want to leave something for my Irene.' He had lost his son when he was fifteen years old."

"God's sword!"

"He would tell me, 'Is it a sin to give ten in order to take twenty? I don't believe it! My own ten cost me not only twenty but a hundred! They are mixed with the sweat of my brow, with the blood of my heart. They are not like the ready money found by others in their fathers' coffers. My father might have had something but my uncle did not leave me even the ashes of it.'"

"That was pretty good advice from the devil! Is that how he confessed to his priest?"

"You can't say that. Who ever saw him take the sacrament?"

"He surely knew the Holy Communion would become a fire in his heart to burn him."

"Let me get through," Charalampos continued. "I am only trying to give you his own words. I am not

trying to prove him right. Another thing he said was this: 'I am not trying to force a loan on anybody. They come of themselves! Idle men and spendthrifts, who waste what they have in dissipation, come to me to borrow money. If I don't give it to them, they will borrow it from a Jew. Why isn't it better for a Christian to make a profit out of it?' This reminds me of something that happened in those hard days when we all ate just boiled vegetables without a drop of oil or vinegar. Old Nicholas, the father of Charidemos, just before he married Agatha, borrowed fifty dollars from Anastases for his wedding expenses. They ate and drank and sang and danced for fifteen days and fifteen nights with all their friends and kin. But after two years 'the comb came to a knot.' For this loan, Anastases dispossessed him of his vineyard and home just as you said a little while ago. He had always to do with some prodigal or other. Sometimes he would even give a loan without interest to a working man who happened to fall sick."

"Well, well! Pity such men can't live forever!"

"If you keep it up you will make him a saint yet!"

"That isn't my point. I wanted to let you know that the man had suffered wrong himself and had gone through many hardships. That is how, I believe, his heart was hardened. It is true, he has done harm to a great many; but why not let the Almighty judge him?"

"He has judged him, it seems," said the oldest man in the company.

"Seems—what?" asked Charalampos.

"He appeared right after the day of his burial, in the night."

"This is the harvest month and the moon is full."

"What do you mean?"

"Somebody is tired guarding his figs at night and spread this rumor to scare thieves away."

"What will not Charalampos invent out of love for his friend!"

"Yet I bet Charalampos has seen him . He is a man of light shadow.* Haven't you told us you have often met with ghosts? You are rather given to psychic things, and you like to wander around nights like a night-owl."

"It is true I have seen them often and I am not afraid. They are airy things that can't touch you. One time, a cold clear night in January at the foot of Kakava Cliff, just as I was coming down to cross the ditch, I saw before me a big black dog with eyes like coals afire and a tail two cubits long. I made the sign of the cross three times. On the third it disappeared and I jumped over the ditch without any trouble. Another time I was keeping watch over my grapes in my vineyard opposite the hill of St. Athanases. The Orion showed it was past midnight. There I saw a great stage drawn by two

* Said of a man who is given to seeing supernatural apparitions.

great white horses loaded with passengers and driven by an old man. It went uphill at full speed."

"What of it? Stages may pass that way any time of day or night."

"True, but although it went at full speed, you could hear neither wheels rattling nor horse-shoes clinking. Not a single sound! The whole way seemed to be strewn with loose cotton. It was Charon passing that way with the souls he had taken with him."

"Then you would make us believe there are no vampires!"

"I don't believe in vampires, because I never have seen them in my life of sixty years. A good many men worse than Anastases have died without repenting; some of them had even robbed churches, a crime not unusual in those days. I say a man can't leave his grave with his whole body before the Day of the Last Judgment, when the Lord will come 'to judge the living and the dead.'"

"That may be true; but black souls like his are condemned immediately and God gives a sign of His judgment."

"The Almighty never reveals His judgment. It is His secret."

"No priest has ever told us that."

"I am older than any one of you," said the oldest of the company. "Some learned man told me once that he had read in a book of a criminal whose soul on his

deathbed was taken by one devil while another crept into his body; and so, while his soul burned in hell, his body was held together by the unclean spirit and remained years among the living to torment them."

"Do you remember of late how Anastases looked after a sickness? One might think he had no blood in his face at all."

"Right! And do you remember how glassy his eyes were?"

Charalampos rose, lighted his pipe for the third time and turned to the shop-keeper:

"Let us all have a drink of wine. My boys, believe all you want; only don't speak about this to anyone else, not for the dead man's sake but for his daughter's. She might die of terror."

"We will do as you wish. But it is common talk already."

They drank their last glass and went out together as if each was afraid to go out alone. Charalampos saw everyone home and then turned towards his own neighborhood. But suddenly he stopped. On second thought, he felt that he did not care to go home yet.

"I sha'n't be able to close my eyes tonight, anyway," he thought, and took the path toward the ravine that runs alongside of the village.

The ravine was much like a funnel with sides spread out and the road cutting it in two. One might think the earth had been split here by an earthquake, and

that the road had been opened by a thunderbolt. In the bottom of the ravine was a small but rushing torrent, which swelled with the gathering of the waters from both slopes in the winter, and became almost dry in the spring, leaving just enough water shining between the pebbles of the bottom to keep the wild flowers of the ravine alive. The place never knew sunrise or sunset and only at noon could it be reached by the sun which flooded the thick grove of olive trees with its light.

But there was something more remarkable still about the place. On one side it was wild and thickly wooded, stretching up to a ridge of great rocks beaten by the sun and cracked by the winds, like petrified skulls of giants. In spots one could see great caves whose openings were partly shaded by wild fig-trees. The natives pointed also to an opening which they thought bottomless, reaching down to the underworld whence the mountain is called Dark. If you should throw a stone into that cavern you would never hear it strike bottom. Those caves, in the old times, were the hiding places of criminals fleeing from the hands of justice and since many have died in them of hunger and thirst, people believed that their ghosts haunted the mountain. No one dared set foot on it in the night for fear of the evil spirits.

The opposite side was tame and spotted with green vineyards, while on one distinct hilltop there was a

little chapel called St. Athanase, the Ascetic, because it was said, a sainted ascetic lived and died there. So, only a stride took one from a wilderness inhabited by the devil and damned men to a place blessed by God's church and a saint's memory. One's imagination was caught by this symbolic contrast.

Charalampos mechanically followed the road dimly lighted by the moon which had now reached the zenith. His mind was absorbed in thought and when he reached the bottom of the ravine and started going uphill he forgot to make the sign of the cross as he used to whenever he faced a chapel. This time he had not taken notice of the little white country temple which was visible on the opposite side. The uphill path ended with a level stretch of considerable length, leading through groves of olive trees to a well-lighted clearing. The soft light of the moon and the pure air of the open caused him to emerge for a moment from his thoughts to look about him for a place to rest. He sat down and plunged into meditation, anxious to clear from his mind the darkness that had been gathering there since he had been left alone by his companions.

At this spot the one slope came to a sudden end and the ground spread out evenly. On the sides of the Dark Mountain an abrupt edge was formed so that the narrow road bending in a horse-shoe curve had the mountain over it and looked on a tremendous precipice below, at the bottom of which flowed another torrent.

From this fenceless balcony one could see the greater valley of that district with the hills that bordered on it, while farther out in the distance the mountains and sea of Epirus mingled with the main, dividing the island of Corfu from Italy. The two seas spread silver white under the light of the moon. The night was still. There was no wind stirring, and nothing marred the summer quiet of the hour but the distant barking of the dogs that watched over the flocks, and the clanking of the bells of sheep as they happened to move in their folds. At intervals, too, from the side of the Dark Mountain the howl of the jackal resounded in the valley, breaking the flow of silence with its weird echo and, mingled with the barking of dogs and the tinkling of bells, it struck the ear just as the quivering flash of lightning in a dark night strikes the eye.

Charalampos paid little attention to the scenery and the sounds about him. He was concerned with the story that his friend Anastases had turned into a vampire which was bound to undo all the effort he had made to persuade Charidemos' mother to give her consent to her son's marriage with the dead man's daughter. He owed his life to Anastases and was eager to save his daughter from misfortune. Was his dead friend really a vampire or did the story spring from the hatred people felt toward him? He would like to know the truth even if he had to face the vampire himself.

At that instant he raised his eyes and suddenly saw

Anastases walking slowly past the place where he had been found dead. He was there with his whole body, just as Charalampos himself had laid him in his grave. He wore his black cap and had his long beard which he had kept as a sign of mourning since his son's death. Charalampos thought first of making the sign of the cross and calling upon the Lord to remember him as he had always done in the past on meeting with ghosts, but he held his hand and his tongue this time. He did not wish to dismiss Anastases before he had spoken to him.

"Is that you, Anastases?" he asked.

But the ghost uttered a pitiful howl like a dog's and disappeared into a grove of cypress trees. Charalampos fell senseless on the ground.

Next morning there was great excitement in the village. Some shepherds, passing through the clearing with their flocks, had found Charalampos just able to stand on his feet and had helped him to go home. Until then nobody had claimed to have seen the dead man, but the accident to Charalampos was clear proof to all that he had surely met with the vampire the night before, at the foot of Dark Mountain.

At noon, when Irene went with her pitcher to the village well, the other women shrank away from her with fear, and grouped themselves apart from her, whispering to each other with mystified looks. The poor girl

grew pale with a feeling of guilt and went back home with trembling knees. Just as she was crossing her threshold a child pointed at her and said to another:

"Look at her! Her father walks from his grave at night."

The rumor had spread to all the neighborhood and no one from the village dared pass the dead man's house any longer. The two women were absolutely deserted, and from their silent home, soon after sunset, they would hear the neighbors bar and lock their doors and windows. No one visited them, not even their old friend Charalampos, who was still in bed, and had called in his confessor.

Something worse happened. After Anastases' burial, his sister went upstairs where Anastases kept his bed and his safe, and after taking out enough money to last for forty days after his death, she locked up the trap-door that led to the upper floor and went downstairs again. The two women were sleeping on the lower floor, for some time nothing disturbed them, but early one night, soon after Charalampos' accident, Irene was startled from her sleep and woke up her aunt.

"What is happening upstairs?" she asked.

"Keep quiet, my child," answered the old woman, "it must be a mouse rummaging for food."

"What mouse? I hear a noise like the clanking of chains dragging on the floor. Can't you hear someone trying to open the trap-door?"

"Make the sign of the cross, my child, and go to sleep."

On the thirty-sixth day after Anastases' death, Charalampos was at last able to visit his friend's home.

"We are in a poor state, Charalampos," complained the old woman. "We don't dare leave the house any longer. We are thought of as women of lost souls. We have to drink the brackish water of our own well. And the fearful nights we spend! The blessed man will not let us rest at all. Do me the favor of going to Priest Euthymios, and tell him to hold a memorial service for him this Saturday."

"You are a second father to me, Charalampos," added the daughter. "But you see life is not meant for me, after this I have no hope that Charidemos will take me."

"Charidemos hasn't changed his mind," said Charalampos.

"I believe you. He is a man of his word. But how can I join his home when his mother does not want me and keeps cursing my father's memory? You know how it is. Perhaps God meant everything for the best. My father was covetous, as people say, and I may not enjoy ill-gotten goods. I am thinking of leaving everything to you to give in alms. I will go to a convent to atone for his tormented soul. It was wrong for me to become engaged to Charidemos against my father's will, and now I pay for it."

"Your plan is pious," said Charalampos, "but let a year go by before you make up your mind. If a man wants to be a hermit he must forget the world first; I don't believe you will ever forget Charidemos."

"If I can't forget him, I shall have to die."

Charalampos made a great effort to check his tears.

"I must go," he said, "to arrange for the service."

"Let it be early, before sunrise," said the old woman, "without the sound of any bell. We will go to church before daybreak and we will come home after dark."

"We'll do what is best," said Charalampos.

Charalampos went first to ask the advice of the pastor of St. John's, who was his confessor.

"I know why you come to me, Charalampos," said the old priest as soon as he saw him. "Since the day you invited me to your house you have been thinking about nothing else but how to help those poor women."

"Yes. I have heard that in the old days they had some way of giving peace to the dead."

"I know it. This time we have to put the people of the village in a forgiving mood first."

"Especially Charidemos' mother. The poor boy, as I have heard, is planning to leave the country forever. Do what you may think best, with God's help. My mind is at a loss ever since my last blow."

"Don't mind that—I have told you your sin has been forgiven. In your desire to help your friend's daughter

you forget for a moment that God has His own will and cannot brook a man's interference. Let us have faith and hope in Him. Saturday is the fortieth day after the poor man's death. Come to the chapel of the Annunciation at the usual hour and bring the two women with you."

"The women want the service to be held in secret."

"These things must not be held in secret. Tell them there is nothing to fear."

The pastor of St. John, ninety years of age and greatly respected, both in his own village and in the surrounding districts, was a keen and far-sighted man. He had foreseen so many things that people thought him a prophet; and he had coped with so many difficult situations that people had come to consider him endowed by God with miraculous grace. During the two intervening days the old hermit called to his cell many of the villagers, as well as the mother of Charidemos. These actions mystified the people; they gathered outside the old man's hut and inquired of each one as he came out what the hermit wanted. No one revealed the secret. On Friday evening the bells of the chapel of the Annunciation sounded mournfully, and the news spread everywhere that on Saturday morning a memorial service would be held for the repose of the soul of Anastases.

In the morning, Charalampos, with the two women, went to church and found it full. The old hermit, with

the other two priests of the village, celebrated the funeral service. After the prayers for the departed, holy water was consecrated. Then the old hermit, planting the Holy Cross upon the dead man's grave, spoke in a voice that could be heard by those in the church, as well as by all standing outside in the churchyard.

"This sinner—we are all sinners—cannot find rest until you have forgiven him. From where he now is, he implores your forgiveness."

With these words he poured the Holy Water into the hole made by the end of the cross. As soon as the ground absorbed it, an earthquake shook the walls of the church, and all those present, as well as the priests, cried:

"Oh, Lord! let thy servant be at rest!"

Then the old priest called to him Irene, Charidemos, and his mother, and placing the bride's hand in that of the bridegroom said to the mother:

"Give your blessing to these two orphans. The Omnipotent wills it."

ANGELICA

By Argyres Eftaliotes

ANGELICA

THERE was great excitement in the village when Angelica made her first appearance. The people who were used to the timid and restrained ways of all village girls saw suddenly one who descended among them like a goddess. In the first place, she was as white as if the sun had never seen her; then she was pleasant and cheerful and lively and she had beautiful white teeth that drove anyone crazy when she smiled. Third, she never wore peasant costumes, her dresses were all from the city. She was the kind you might look at and never get tired of looking.

Angelica started a revolution in the village. The good village folks had not been anticipating such a trouble when they brought her there. Their purpose was innocent. All they needed was a good schoolmistress who would teach their girls how to read and write; so they wrote about it to the city, and after a little while they received Angelica as a reply.

They had not built a schoolhouse yet. They had to rent an ordinary house in which Angelica immediately proceeded to civilize the girls of the village. So far so good. The girls were learning that bread could not be

eaten in a book unless it took the ancient name, and when they left off the books they began their handiwork. In the evening, when they went home, one would show her father the hemming she had made, another a pair of fancy slippers, and another an embroidered tobacco-pouch. The fathers would look on these achievements with satisfaction and were proud that their daughters were at last learning city ways.

But this was not the end of the matter. The big girls, who could no longer go to school because of their age, did not like the idea of being left behind. Why should their younger sisters alone get all the merits and graces? So they proceeded to besiege Angelica and would not let her alone. There was no evening party where Angelica was not the central figure. She would tell them stories, explain to them different city customs, sing them city songs, and tell one tale after another. And they would forget their country plays and songs and stories and listen to Angelica with enchantment.

Of course when the schoolmistress left the party to go home, the village girls would remember their native ways, and so they ridiculed their poor friend in a thousand ways. One would mimic her voice; another her uncommon words; another her roguish eyes. But their play was entirely innocent, without jealousy and without sting; all they were after was a little fun. When they had done with laughing, they would end by expressing their admiration for her red lips, her perfect

white teeth, her little feet, her light step, her ornaments, her dresses, her grace, and her beauty.

By noticing and admiring everything about her, the village girls began to change their ways. Of course, this change was slow and superficial. A peasant girl cannot change her nature. Consequently the change went only so far as a few words, some mannerisms, and some ornaments. This was exactly what made the village fathers look on the fascinating witch with misgivings. The good homespun stuffs, silks and linens were not enough any longer; they had to buy from the shop all kinds of ribbons and buttons and rags in addition. Worst of all, the imitation was not perfect and so you might see all of a sudden queer combinations of city hats and country necklaces, or French *furbelows* and short country jackets, or something similar. Now, the fathers found no particular fault with the strange fashions; they rather liked them, but what impressed them painfully was the effect they had on their pockets, the expense they involved. This was a revolution that was bound to inspire them with fear. So the more fashionable the daughter became the more careful the father was of his greasy fur-coat and his patched boots.

But the trouble did not stop there. Angelica, as we have seen, was vivacious and talkative. In imitation of her the tongues of the peasant girls began to grow sharper and sharper, sometimes even in the presence of

strangers. At times they would go as far as to say a pert word to their fathers.

Now the prominent men of the village and the members of the school-board were good patriots and had the progress of their village at heart. But their care for their households was superior even to their patriotism, and every time they assembled in the coffee-house to play with their beads, they would consider various plans of curtailing Angelica's influence somewhat. They could not get rid of her—that was plain. A teacher they had to have anyway. Who could guarantee a better one, if they should dismiss her? They might get a worse one.

"I have found a way out," said one of them one day. His name was Beardless, though he had a beard. "Let us make our schoolmistress marry someone. She will have a home of her own then and there will be peace for her and us, too."

"Marry her? How? Didn't you hear what she was telling my daughter the other day? It was a shame, she said, that a girl should have to marry a man her parents wished on her, instead of getting a man of her own choice!"

"Well, then, let her make her own choice; a little management and the thing is done."

As good luck would have it, there lived among them a man with a good, generous heart, Myzethras, the master-mason. He was the victim chosen by Beardless,

who found him one evening in the wine-shop and with a few words led him into his trap.

"Why do you waste your good looks and your youth?" he said. "Where will you be able to find again such a fairy, such a sea-foam of beauty, such a lily? What is better than such a woman? You have enough money; what does it matter if she is without a dowry? Hurry up and get ready for a serenade. If you are afraid of a serenade send her a flower, find some sort of pretext and the rest will take care of itself. Why waste any more words? Go to her home tonight and see whether the new wall is really settling. Just make a beginning and don't worry about the rest. I'll be here."

Myzethras at first took all this as a joke on Beardless' part. He knew Beardless was fond of teasing people and he did not pay much attention to him. But as he was going home that evening, Myzethras did not sing in his usual way. He was buried in strange thoughts. He had lost his peace of mind. Why should Beardless play that joke on him? he wondered. Why could it not be true as well? What did he have to lose if he should try anyway? If he succeeded, what man in the village would have such a treasure for a wife? And if he failed and people made the customary song about it Beardless would have to bear blame, because he would be the cause of it all.

He took the uphill road that led him to the school-

house. He stopped for a while to get his breath. Then he cast a glance at Angelica's windows and he felt an impulse to burst into loud song. But he refrained and walked on. At last he came to the door. His heart was trembling now, his throat was getting dry, and he perspired with anxiety. He stooped to peep through the keyhole before knocking. He saw the servant in the hall, and through the open door of the room he could see Angelica sitting before a work-table, bending over her embroidery.

"Beardless is right," he thought, "she is a devil of a girl! A fairy! But what shall I tell her first? Well, I might start with a 'good evening,' and God will help me with the rest."

He knocked at the door. The maid opened it and the master-mason entered.

Angelica started up half-frightened. She stood as straight as a church-taper with her dark-brown eyes wide open, wondering what he wanted at such a late hour.

"Good evening to you," he began, "and a lamp, please, to light my way to the cellar; they say the new wall is settling and Beardless has sent me to look it over."

Angelica directed the maid:

"Maroula, light a lamp and give it to the mason. I hope there is nothing the matter with the wall."

"I have already examined it from outside. I found

nothing wrong there. But I had better examine the inside, too."

He went down to the cellar, and when he came up reported that there was no cause for fear, and they had better hush the matter up because people might get scared for nothing and stop sending their girls to school.

During the report he had the chance of facing Angelica, standing. Myzethras was not a bad looking lad at all. He was tall, had brown eyes, a smart thin moustache, and a very fine tongue, an expert in winning words. But just now his tongue was as good as tied. What could he say to her and the maid within hearing? He looked all around, examining every wall as an excuse to linger. Then, with a sudden inspiration, he exclaimed: "Since I am here, let us have a look at the schoolroom from the inside." He took the lamp and went into the schoolroom alone, to think out some way to begin. Angelica had not followed him.

"See here!" he called out.

Angelica entered the schoolroom. Light and darkness blended in the spacious room with no other light than the small wick of the lamp. Angelica walked very lightly and stood like a statue before him, dazzling him with her graceful dress, her dark brown eyes, her white neck, and her little hands pressed against her bosom as if she felt the chill of the room.

"That crack there must be what made Beardless worry," he remarked. "What it needs is a little plaster,

that's all. The building is as sound as it is lucky. All our girls improve wonderfully here."

"It is so kind of you to say that," Angelica replied with a smile.

"Madam, village folks talk straight. I could tell you another truth if I was not afraid you might take it amiss."

"What is that?" Angelica was curious and took one step nearer him.

"There is a soul in the village who is almost crazy about you."

"Is that so? And who is this soul? Tell me while we are here. Nobody can hear it."

"What if you get angry?"

"I can promise you I won't; why should I get angry?"

"Well, I'll tell you then. He is a man who is neither old nor poor. He hasn't got much education but he has seen a little of the world. He learned his trade abroad. You see, he is a skilled workman. He cannot tell his trouble like a book, but he can sing like a bird in the woods. He can't bow like a Frenchman, but he can love like a Greek."

"And what's his name?" asked Angelica, beating her little foot with impatience.

"I cannot tell his name; I don't dare," and Myzethras stood silent.

"I wonder if he can be so tall and handsome and

strong and sweet-spoken?" Angelica asked, again with a laugh.

"I can't tell you, I can't; my mind is going out like this lamp." He placed the lamp on a desk and fixed his eyes on the ground, in deep thought.

"What is the matter, my good lad? You seem to be in trouble."

His eyes fixed on her, Myzethras had an inspiration. Spontaneously he burst forth:

"No trouble to the world confessed
Brings such a sorry plight
As love that burns within the breast
And never comes to light."

The teacher began to understand something. But whether from a desire to play or from her willingness to spend a little more time on the matter, she wanted to hear more about it and displayed unsuspecting innocence.

"It seems to me you are deeply in love," she said. "I wonder who the unfortunate one can be who is ignorant of your affection?"

Myzethras' eyes were in flames as he murmured:

"Angelica is sugar-sweet,
As flower-kissed bees, home-flitting;
Angelica is water fresh,
A drink for angels fitting."

Angelica could pretend no more. A shiver ran through her. She could not stay any longer beside him. He might stoop and kiss her. So she took two steps back, put on her air of indifference as to a stranger, and cut the interview short:

"Well, there's nothing the matter with the wall. It was very good of you to take this trouble." And she went back into the room.

Myzethras was lost. He felt the sting of both love and shame. He looked around to find some avenue of retreat so that he might not again meet proud Angelica.

His eyes fell on the outside door of the school through which the girls went when they were dismissed and walked straight to it. He opened it and slipped out on tip-toe.

But when he had reached the yard and had started going down the hill the breeze blew on him and he recovered himself. Shame had gone, but love still remained. So when he had gone a little further and saw the plain spreading before him, and the moonlight playing on the waves, his good heart was again awakened and he made the world resound with his song:

"I say good-night to my sweetheart, I will not tell her name,
The name that makes my eyes shed tears, and fills my heart with pain."

II

"Tell me, please, tell me some more of your enchanting little songs," said Angelica one evening to the girls who were busy sewing and embroidering in the light of the oil lamp. "They are very, very pretty and sweet and fragrant like royal mint. Tell me some more! I am just dying for these country blossoms of yours which you scorn, my poor girls, not realizing what a treasure is yours! O my village, my dear little village! Where can you get such an evening party in a city? Where else can you hear such scented little songs? Some day I will know them, too, these songs. I just can't live without them." At the same time she began humming one of the village airs:

"My little cypress, young and tall, I wish to speak to you;
Just bend your head to hear my words; and take my life so true."

A ripple of laughter ran around the group. The girls seemed to have gone mad.

"How well she sings them! As if she had been born among us in the village, the little rogue!"

"Bah! Didn't you know I was born in a village? Of course, they took me to the city very young, poor girl, because I had neither father nor mother. My

old uncle, Father Phlessas, took me to the city and brought me up and gave me my education. Yet I remember my blessed mother as if she lived only yesterday. I will show you how she looked. Everybody says I am just like her."

She took a country scarf and bound it about her head and looked at them with quiet and thoughtful eyes. She was exactly like a picture now.

The country girls sat and looked at her with silent astonishment. They were deeply moved and two of them were actually crying.

"You are one of us, Angelica. Get it out of your head that you will make Frenchwomen of us," said the oldest of them.

"Make Frenchwomen of you? God forbid! Better see to it that you don't make a Frenchwoman of me now that I have become a country girl again. One week more and you will sing a bridal song for me!"

All the girls were thunderstruck! They dropped their handiwork and looked at each other with amazement. Then they started screaming and screeching like mad and jumped up, crowding around Angelica, wanting to know exactly what she meant.

"Just let me get my breath, and I will tell you. Simple enough; I fell in love with a young lad and I will marry him. Don't get jealous. He's nobody's sweetheart. He is from another neighborhood. He is neither old nor poor. He hasn't got much education but

he knows his trade. He can't tell his love like a book but he can sing like a bird in the woods."

"And his name?" all shouted at the same time.

"His name? Something that tastes nice with honey."

"Myzethras!"* exclaimed the oldest girl.

"Right! And since you are the first to find him out you will come to help the bride dress on her wedding day. It will be at Beardless' home."

It turned out exactly as she had said. Beardless, like a good man, assumed the part of a kind father and took the whole affair into his hands.

Angelica insisted on being a real country bride. There was gold-dust and all kinds of ornaments and good times such as make country people call a wedding "joy."

As for the bridegroom, nobody could ever put a stop to his wild enthusiasm. Even during the ceremony, he bent over and said to Beardless:

"I am a king! Angelica is my crown! And you are my vizier!"

He was not far from right. Beardless had managed the whole affair like a regular vizier. He was the man who had gone and stirred up Angelica's flame after that historic evening. He had carried the wedding message to Myzethras' mother. Within two weeks everything was finished and mother Myzethras had settled down with her son and daughter-in-law, determined to live for-

*Myzethra is a kind of soft cheese somewhat like cream cheese, eaten with honey in various places in Greece.

ever with them and to take care of her grandchildren while Angelica was running her school.

The schoolmistress had now become a respectable matron; she dressed, spoke and behaved like everybody else; and the village girls were cured of the craze that had been driving them to ape the manners of Frenchwomen.

A MAN'S DEATH

By Kostes Palamas

A MAN'S DEATH

DEDICATION

THIS story I dedicate to you, simple and illiterate woman, to you, my poor Dawn. It was from your mouth that I heard it first and I tried to keep it as faithfully as I could so that I might be just your own echo. For when you talk, a whole people whispers your words, and though you don't know it, every story you tell is a poem of the race. You are no woman; you are heralding Rumor. You have nothing of the flesh; you are made of soul. Your eyes are never still, never dusky. Whatever you tell is living before you and you see everything as Imagination would see it. For this reason your words are alive and your speech wise, my simple and illiterate woman. Your eyes magnetize me, your words fascinate me, and I feel something that day by day binds me closer to you. You first sang to me, a baby in the cradle; may the last words that reach my ears on my deathbed come from your mouth.

A MAN'S DEATH

No one had gone to bed; everybody was up. How could they sleep on such a great night,—Good Friday

night! It was past midnight and the bells of all three little chapels of the Village by the Sea were dumb. When Christ suffers, bells, too, like things with human souls, are silent and cannot make a sound because of their deep pain. But the children deafened everybody with their wooden rattles and ran from street to street and from door to door, shouting at the top of their voices: "Time for Church! Time for Church!"

A few sleepy ones were startled, jumped up and rushed to the windows. They thought it was early dawn and the procession of the Holy Sepulchre was passing through the street.

For love of Christ, once a year, on Good Friday night the bells of the Village by the Sea are dumb; just the bells. Because from end to end the whole village is up and stirring for love of Christ, once a year, on Good Friday night.

So it happened on that night, too. Women and men, together or separately, were coming out of their homes or their coffee-houses, and starting for church. Their footsteps fell heavy on the pavements and became more and more distant in the echo of the night, dripping with cool April dew. The moon, weary for sleep, was about to set; and its light fell dimmer and dimmer on the dark old huts with their weathered walls and on the crooked streets which somehow were never without a bit of mud. The churches were brilliant with light; and

their doors wide open. Now and then you could hear the reader's voice just before the beginning of the lamentations.

But the great celebration was taking place outside the churches. Around big fires, fed with rosin, vine-twigs, old lumber, sweepings, wooden troughs, wash-baskets, and sometimes with a whole window frame—God help the low houses and thoughtless housewives on such a night—a whole lot of children of all sorts, and among them even men with moustaches, jumped and ran and shouted and acted like mad. In the dark, quiet night skyrockets went flashing and big cannon-crackers—Lord help us!—and Chinese crackers and grasshoppers all skilfully made with reed and heavy paper filled with lots of powder. Inside the church collection was taken for powder. Grown men and boys singed themselves and glistened in the midst of the lights and flames of all these fireworks for the good of the season. The whole Village by the Sea smelled of powder, and one parish seemed at war with another.

It wasn't the churches only that were open in that hour. Here and there one could find a public kitchen or a coffee-house with half-opened door. It was not in everybody's power to stand on his feet in church all the time, until 3:00 A. M., when the procession to the Holy Sepulchre was to start out! With a cup of strong sweet coffee, some tit-bit or other, and a draught or two of wine from Pyrgos, a man could come to, after the

fasting period, and pick up enough strength to join the procession of the Sepulchre; and so, one after another, small companies with refreshed stomachs were walking slowly toward the church.

One merry company had forgotten itself in Psemenos' tavern till the very last. There were Metros Rumeliotes, Yannakos Tarnanamas, Markos Kaninias, and Charitaina's son, whom nobody called by his name till he had forgotten it himself and answered only to the name of Taria Tarela. All four were seamen. The first owned a fishing boat; the second worked on it; the third was working with the transport boats; and Taria Tarela was a fisherman. All four were twenty-five years old and had lived like brothers since they were small children. Wine and talk had lit up their heads, and if it hadn't been Good Friday they might have taken to loud singing. Song somewhat timid and soft tried to spring from their lips against their will even on such a night. But at last they were aware that it was late. They could hear the lamentations sung in the Chapel of St. Nicholas just a few steps from the tavern. Psemenos was on the wing, ready to close up. They all jumped up and walked out into the street. "I forgot those Roman candles!" shouted Kaninias. They were going to light them in the procession. "I put them at the foot of the table, on the left side of the cover," said Metros. "Wait a minute; I will fetch them."

Hurriedly he turned toward the coffee-house, but as

he turned on the pavement he slipped and—pop!—he fell down flat with a heavy thud.

Three loud laughs escaped from the mouths of Markos, Yannakos and Taria, while a painful cry, "I'm done for," was heard from Metros.

"Come, now, man, don't say 'done for,' get up; did you hurt yourself?"

"I say, I am done for! I can't get up! Can't you believe me?"

He stopped with a groan and his voice sounded broken and plaintive as if it, too, had been hurt in the fall. It struck their ears so painful and so low that it seemed to come from the very heart of the man; and it was so changed with pain and so faint, that all three felt their bodies covered with sweat. They saw it was no joke.

"Metros, old boy!" was all they could say, and they hurried to get hold of him and help him up.

"All for nothing! A bad step—I slipped—it seems on some fruit—it must have been a lemon peel—such bad luck—I am done for! Oh!!"

His voice became weaker and more plaintive. He tried to stand up but could not. The others had to lift him.

"Courage, Metros!"

Metros could not stand on his feet; one leg, the right one, he could not feel at all. It seemed to him like a piece of iron which he could not move. They held him up by slipping their arms under his armpits. Psemenos

had closed his shop and stood by to see whether he could help. Farther away the children's voices were heard from the church, loud and cheerful. The rockets rose into the sky and the night was all flashes and racket and whistles, with showers of sparks. Through the door and windows of St. Nicholas Church the lighted tapers and candles of the procession of the Sepulchre seemed like so many stars. Clear voices from children's throats sang:

"Sweet spring,
Sweet child of mine
Where is thy beauty gone?"

"Let us take him home."

"Go and fetch my mother, Kaninias; she is gone to church."

"You are right: Kaninias, go through the little back door and speak to the chapel-keeper first. She may tell her that someone is looking for her; use some tact."

"Don't scare the old woman blue, brother; just tell her Metros would like to speak to her."

The widow of Demos, Metros' mother, was in church; she had been there since the evening before with the other women; she had spent the night by the Sepulchre. Her husband had died before she reached middle age; and ever since that time good-bye to jackets of gold brocade, dashing skirts and red fez! She kept house

only for Metros' sake, her only boy, and when she went out it was to take care of the little vineyard she had inherited from her husband. On her way to the vineyard she had to go through the graveyard, and now and then she would light a taper and burn some incense on the blessed man's grave. She was a strong, industrious woman. But when her son grew up and sailed with the ships, following his father's trade, and when, by and by, with his mother's blessing and by his own labor, he had become the owner of a sailing boat, the widow of Demos remembered that she was a Christian woman. She had taken care of her little fledgling; she might now take care of her own soul. From that time on she went to church more often; and as the years went by—she was now in the sixties—she felt she was becoming more and more pious. But, to tell the truth, she was more afraid of witchcraft and of fairies, a state of mind which she could not understand herself.

"Mrs. Demaina, they are looking for you. Your son——" The keeper of the church whispered the words into the mother's ears as she tugged at her dress.

"My boy? What does he want of me?"

She had not finished her question when Markos Kaninias appeared before her, without a hat and panting hard:

"It is nothing, Mrs. Demaina; Metros has only sprained his ankle."

Up jumped the old woman. A rumor started about

her, and the women began talking in whispers. "Keep quiet, women!" shouted the deacons with anger. But how could the women keep silent? Something had happened. What sort of sprain was this? Someone had been burned with the cannon crackers; someone had been stabbed. In a moment half the church was empty. Who could hold the people back? The church could be found again; but such accidents—God deliver us!—cannot happen every day.

"My eyes! My eyes! Christ help us!" cried the old woman, running. Outside the church her boy was standing before her, leaning against the wall, with his companions near him and five or six other men.

"It is nothing, Mother; I slipped and fell; my knee is a little hurt. Let us go home and have something done for it."

The poor woman felt a great stone removed from her breast. She had feared that something worse had happened; but when she saw him standing like that before her in the half-dimmed light of the moon she breathed again.

"Christ help us! It was an evil hour, my boy!"

But she did not know that Metros could not stand upon his legs and that he himself had asked the boys to help him lean against the wall so that his mother might not be shocked too suddenly. While he was asking them to aid him in that position, he had thought also of something else, which did not escape his lips—

"How will Phrosyne take it when she sees me!"

Phrosyne was his sweetheart.

Holding, dragging, half-lifting him, they finally reached the house. That year neither the widow of Demos, Markos Kaninias, Yannakos Tarnanamas, nor Taria Tarela took any joy in the procession of the Holy Sepulchre. The sick man could not close his eyes; he suffered from pain and groaned like a bull. His leg swelled and swelled until it became like a pillar!

They called the best doctor in the Sea Village, a well-educated doctor with a good name. He had saved many from death's hands. True, the village folk called on him only in the last moment, when they had lost all faith in the men and women quacks. For this reason he appeared chronically angry; not because he was losing anything from not being called sooner but because they were risking their lives, the fools, by trusting mere cheats. But, just the same, he did his work, and after he had saved his patient he would burst into scoldings, whether you paid him or not. At first men were afraid of him, airs had no effect upon him. But when they got used to his ways they could not do without him. He looked more like a skipper than a doctor. This time Markos Kaninias, Yannakos Tarnanamas, and Taria Tarela acted honestly and wisely; they went directly to the doctor's and would not pay any attention to Mrs. Demaina, who wanted to call on Madame Mariye of Constantinople because she could avert the evil eye, overcome

mysterious diseases, and straighten out dislocated bones and was good for anything.

The doctor looked the leg over. What a devil's hurt, right on the knee-cap, the very hinge of the leg! He looked at it carefully then he wrapped it tight between reeds—bandaged it, as the doctors say, and then spoke:

"Don't move it; your leg will be cured but it will take time and patience. With time the tendon will turn back and your leg will be well. Only, for your sake, don't bother it."

He repeated the last words again and again:

"Don't bother it!"

He knew how stubborn the folks of the Village by the Sea were.

Metros Roumeliotes had a big heart and great patience. But the trouble that had come to him was God's curse. The folks of the Village by the Sea might have a thousand minds for one thing; for Metros they had only one: Metros was a man! They laughed about education but they did worship manhood—Metros had never set foot within a school. He had learned his lessons from the sun, the wind, and the waves; and among them he had grown from his childhood up. There was nothing uncommon about his appearance. His breast was no "mossy wall," and his head no "castle," like the hero's in the old folk song. He was neither tall nor short; rather thin than stout, of dark complexion, with a thin moustache and thick curly hair; he wore

his cap jauntily on one side and a red scarf was wound many times about his waist. Winter and summer he wore a flannel shirt. Yet, in spite of this ordinary appearance, he was bubbling over with manly vigor which one could see in his bearing, in his walk and in every glance and movement.

So Metros Roumeliotes, with his twenty-five years, his inconspicuous body and his almost shy appearance could make and unmake a world. Nobody could outrun him; with his fist he could bring down a buffalo. When he planted his feet on the ground, no man could move him. One day Yannakos Tarnanamas, Markos Kaninias and Taria Terela struggled for a whole hour, with their hands around his legs, trying to pull him from his place. In vain! He stood as firm as a rock. At the end, with their struggling and sweating they were so dizzy they came very near fainting. But with those legs of his—which were so iron-hard that nobody could even bend them, he could fly and jump and whirl around as if he were made of wings and flame and wind, whenever the son of the widow of Demos led a dance.

Every year, on the festival of St. Elijah, on the slopes of Mt. Zygos, where the cold water runs and the plane trees with their leaves make a cheerful shelter of cool breezes and shadows and sweet whispers, near the hiding places of the old klephts,* Metros Roumeliotes, in his

* Popular heroes who, under the Turkish yoke, roamed in the mountains whence they made raids on the Turks to avenge the victims of Turkish tyranny. They are the theme of many beautiful folk songs in Greece.

white kilts and the gold armor of his grandfather, who had been a squire to Makres, the famous mountain chief, would go with the other villagers to the festival and dance. All others then would drop their own fun, gather around him, and forget themselves in gazing. Every step of his in the dance, alert and swift like the motion of wings, diffused sweetness and aroused manhood in everyone. It transported one into another world, the world of legends and of strong warriors who would first dance with other young people on the plains and then fight with Charon on the marble threshing floors.* The women who saw him then would remember him many months after the festival with pride in their hearts. Often companies came from the neighboring villages and even from other towns to St. Elijah's festival, not so much for the festival itself as to see this dancer.

It was then that Phrosyne, the daughter of Sebdas, the best little girl from Melissi, three miles from the Village by the Sea, first saw him. He saw her, too, and they were well matched. After a few months, in the springtime, old Sebdas sent a wedding message to the widow of Demos, and the message was well received. The betrothal took place at Melissi. To this ceremony Metros came bringing along his mother, Yannakos Tar-

*In many a Greek legend today Charon, the death-god, rides on a black steed over the earth, dragging behind him the souls he vanquishes. Often he meets with stout resistance and defeat at the hands of such heroes as are referred to in the text of the story.

nanamas, Markos Kaninias and Taria Terela, his inseperable friends, and all his relatives. After a few days, he went there again with the same crowd to bring the gifts to his future bride, according to the old custom: cloth and silk stuff, a bracelet, and a dozen silver saucers. For two days they celebrated joyously with violin music, and appointed the day after Easter for their wedding. But before Easter day, the evil hour had come, and Metros could not return to Melissi.

Many had envied the fortune of young Phrosyne. There was a girl in the village, a small vivid brunette, full of laughter and whim, Morfo,* the daughter of Garoufalia,—Crazy Morfo, as the neighbors called her, —almost died of grief when she heard of the betrothal. She was no more seen in her little piazza, watering her fragrant flowers and mints, humming the tune of her favorite dance, "Black Little Shoe," and casting sweet glances on anyone who went by. Only late at dusk some of the women neighbors, watching through their window railings, saw Morfo two or three times as she passed Metros' home, covered all over with a scarf. She would linger before his lighted window for a while, and then, casting frightened glances about her, would run away like a scared deer. Love for Metros had burned in her heart and she had hoped that some day he would take her as his wife.

* The name means "Beautiful." "Garoufalia" means "carnation flower." Both are common names throughout Greece among the peasantry.

Metros Roumeliotes was a real man, and had all the gifts of a man; speech, impulse, sense of humor, beauty, pride, love of life and contempt of death. He had gone through many seastorms and survived many shipwrecks. On the open sea, his courage was beyond measure. Without provocation, he gave no trouble. But should you offend him or touch him where you should not, you did so at your peril. He was not afraid of firearms, nor did he care much about them. Once he got into trouble with ten Highland soldiers, all picked men, and he chased them all the way back to their barracks. He never took account of danger, never cared for pain, and never feared death. One thought alone chilled his blood and made him marble stiff. He dreaded to be a cripple.

The injury to his leg cost him more anguish than any other misfortune. He would rather stand the loss of his property and the pains of a thousand pests than be permanently lamed. Better death! If he was to be cured, he must be cured without a sign of lameness. If he was to leave his bed, he must not leave it with a crooked leg. Never that! For Metros Roumeliotes, without realizing it, worshipped only one God, and that God was Beauty; the holy Beauty of manly vigor and health that has the body for a temple. Let every evil in the world assail that body; but no trace of their attack should be left on it as an insult and defilement. A crippled body is a disgraced body. For men like the

son of the widow of Demos, ugliness was dishonor.

From the night of the accident until the day when he first left his bed to walk, three months went by. He spent them patiently. The doctor had told him he would surely be cured. But when he saw that his leg was crooked and that he could not bend it; that his knee had been turned and that he was limping, he lost all hope. A silent complaint seized him, and a sorrow that no learned man could describe held him fast. He consigned to the dogs doctor and drugs, and lay in bed again, longing for death. In vain his poor mother tried to console him, the mother who within those three months had grown ten years older.

"Don't say a word, Mother. Either my leg will be cured, or I don't want to live. No man shall call me a cripple!"

When one day some of his friends went so far as to say, "See, you are all right now! Don't be so particular. Come, let's go to Melissi. Your girl is crazy to see you," Metros was angry. "May I never look upon her, if it is to be in such a condition. Better a homeless hermit in the mountains than a bridegroom with a crooked leg!"

The memory of his sweetheart opened his heart's wounds again. How could he go to Melissi? What could they do with him if he went? Should they embalm him

in order to look at him? Or should they hang him on the wall for a saint's picture? Then he imagined himself in the bridegroom's place, at the time when they would have to drag him single-legged about the altar during the sacred Isaiah Dance.* He thought of himself unable to sit down at mealtimes, unable to lead the dance, to run, to display his strength, to wrestle, to jest, or sport. Then he saw himself as captain of his own ship, unable to stand on his feet, leaning on a staff, holding to the ropes and depending on another for everything. They had promised a man to the bride and now they were to give her a cripple! He could never bring himself to enslave the girl. Though she was good-hearted and would never show it, she would certainly feel the secret pain in her heart. Such is the world. He himself would have felt the same way. He would rather shoulder a pest than a crippled woman.

"I am losing my child," often complained the widow of Demos, "and it won't be his leg that will kill him, but his grief over it."

And she would cry and make the sign of the cross. The three inseparable friends thought of their brave Metros every hour in the day, and when the work was over they would run to his side to keep him company

* Just before the conclusion of the Greek wedding ceremony the priest in his vestments leads the bride and bridegroom about the altar in a solemn dance, followed by the maid of honor and best man. With joined hands they dance in a circle, while the guests shower the couple with confetti. The song begins with the words "Isaiah, dance. . . . "

and comfort him. All in vain! He would not listen to anyone. He had been patient for three months. He could no more stand the feeling of that cursed limb of his, a withered part of his own body. He would seize a saw and saw it away, or take an axe and chop it off.

"There is no God! That is the end of it!"

II

August had come. The sick man could lift his leg but he could not bear other men's eyes upon him; and so he kept himself shut in his own home. From his window one could see the peaceful harbor of the Sea Village changing to a thousand colors like a thousand dreams at every kiss of the sun from morning to dusk. One could face the open sea, rose-blue at dawn, silver-gold at noon, black-green a little later, and violet for a while at sunset. Sometimes it would tremble with all the colors mingling together like a whole world with a world's cares and passions.

Sometimes the winds would push the peaceful waters of the Village by the Sea far towards the outer bay and sometimes would spread them flooding towards the land. The north wind would give them a different appearance; the northwest, a different sweetness; the west wind a different smell, the south wind different waves.

But more than all the colors and murmurings, and breezes, and charms of the sea, the sick man, sitting at

his window, felt the call of the little ships that skipped lightly and quietly over the water so much like the black terns and snow-white gulls that one could hardly tell them apart. He saw the fishing boats sail empty away and come back laden to the shore. Farther out the freight boats would take in the bales of raisins for the great city. From the back side of the house he could see the green belt of the plains. Amber grapes were gleaming on the vines and the raisins lay darkening on the threshing floors. How the fruitful plain was filled with fragrance! At dawn and at dusk every property owner was busy going and coming. The workers, men from Cephalonia with their picks, and women from Amplanite with their baskets, passed back and forth under his window. The sea sent him its salt smell and the plain its fragrance; and the more he felt himself crippled, the more beautiful he thought the world was; and the more he saw the withering of his own youth, the younger the world appeared to him. At this season, where would he be? On what waters would he be sailing? Where would he be working? What a life this, if he could call it life!

His chums did not bother him, but they tried to cheer him up. They always told him that his leg would straighten out with time. Since he would not listen to any suggestion about any learned doctors from Athens, they began speaking about the quack doctors of the village, the medicine men who could cure every kind of

disease with their quack medicines. As always happens, each one of them would recall some story about a sick man given up by the doctor and saved by a practical medicine man. Then young and old fishermen, skippers, merchandise men, official men, scribes, the schoolmaster, the priest, and even the mayor, all who came to see Metros advised him to be patient, and to keep away from doctors. After all, the practical medicine men could do the work.

One day during the first fortnight of August* Yannakos Tarnanamas came running in. A famous medicine man had come from the village of Lygaria. His name was Kopanitsas. He had been invited to Meletes' home to cure his cancer. He was renowned in all Roumele† and even farther throughout half of the Moreas. As soon as the village folk heard of it, they turned out in crowds to see him. He knew every disease and could cure them all. An excellent surgeon! Everyone whom Yannakos asked about him told him Kopanitsas worked miracles. Why not bring him to see Metros? What could they lose?

With the grief that burdened his heart, Metros had gradually convinced all those who loved him that the worse evil was not the pain of his leg but the fact of his lameness. His friends felt they should try anything

* This is a period of strict fasting in preparation for the festival of the Ascension of the Virgin on Aug. 15th.

† Term applied vaguely to ancient Sterea Hellas, especially to Aetolia and Acarnania.

to avoid such a misfortune. Thus in the end they called in Kopanitsas. The sick man wanted him, the mother wanted him, the friends and all the relatives of Metros wanted him, and everybody they consulted said, "call him!"

A white-kilted peasant, he was, about fifty years of age, tall and thin. He had a big nose and a face on which hair could not grow. At first sight of him, the sick man did not like him, but what could he do?

Kopanitsas had only one eye that looked as big as two under the blackness of his bushy eyebrows. As he stepped into the house he put on such airs of importance! He looked at Metros' leg, he clasped it, turned it.

"I'll cure it," he declared. "I will do it my own way."

"May God help your hands, doctor."

"Let us wait three or four days. We must go towards the light of the moon, and these are thin days. We'll find the lucky day though. You must know there are some days when you could bring a great plague on a man; you might even kill him if you should as much as take a little blood from him. Today is the thirteenth of the month. We'll see about it on the sixteenth."

Then he turned to the widow and prescribed:

"Five drams of mustard, ten drams of gum, eight drams of rhubarb, five drams of frankincense, two drams of pepper-root, two drams of cinnamon. Pound them together. Take an oka of honey, skim it, boil the other

things with it and then stir them well and let him eat it regularly. This is a very nourishing compound. With it he can stand anything, and he needs strength."

From that day to the sixteenth he made himself perfectly at home. Nor would they let him leave the house at all. They thought it their duty to please him in every possible way. Of course, the medicine-man did not particularly care to go round the public kitchens of Sea Village or spend his nights in its inns. He was certainly glib in relating the wonders of his medical power. Yannakos Tarnanamas, Markos Kaninias, and Taria Terela never left his side and listened to him with open mouths.

At last dawned the day they awaited with beating hearts. On the sixteenth of the vintage month, while the must was beginning to flow from the wine-presses, and the first rains were falling, when the last swallows were flying towards the south and the last grape-clusters were being gathered, Kopanitsas turned to Metros.

"Courage now! You will feel a little pain and then all will be well."

"Pain I can stand, doctor; only my leg. . . ."

Kopanitsas made a sign to Markos Kaninias and the other two.

"You must hold him pretty fast, you understand? Lady, have you got that place ready?"

In the middle of the room they spread blankets and quilts, and on them they laid Metros.

"Is the raki ready? There it is, drink it, Metros!"

Metros drank about fifty drams of it.

"Good for you, old lion!"

Then Kopanitsas laid Metros on his back and, lifting the right leg, the one that had been hurt, he placed it over his left shoulder; then he seized the left leg and placed it over his right shoulder. Then, all of a sudden, he kicked—yes, he kicked hard against the suffering leg. A "crack!" was heard as of something breaking, and a groan, a lion's groan from the tortured man. The house was shaken. All three of them could not hold him the way he shook and writhed.

"Christ and the Holy Virgin help us!" cried the widow of Demos.

"Don't lose heart, Metros," urged the other.

"You have killed me! Oh!" Metros groaned.

"Now you are all right! Within a fortnight you will be on your feet again!" said Kopanitsas, and turned again to the widow to give his orders as fast as he could.

"Pound lead, soak it in vinegar for two days, then burn it well with sulphur till it is ashes. Mix these ashes with red earth, wax, incense, gum, and green oil, and put this ointment on his leg every day, morning and night."

He said no other word and he gave no more orders. His mule was waiting outside of the house. He slipped into his purse the two twenty-five drachma bills which

he was to have according to the agreement, said goodbye to the sick man and to the others and off he went. No one ever saw him again.

From that day Metros Roumeliotes saw no improvement. The fourteen days went by, but he had not left his bed nor was he ever able to leave it. His leg became inflamed and the sore became worse and worse. Metros lay down like a paralytic man, pining and wearing away with pain.

Two months went by. The winter set in. Moss covered the old walls; a leaden sky lay heavy on the heart, and the damp south wind penetrated into the bones. No hope for the sick man!

It so happened that another medicine man came through the Village by the Sea that winter. This time the news was brought in by Markos Kaninias. He had once fallen into the hands of the quacks and it seemed to be his fate not to be able to escape them. In the midst of the black ashes of grief there comes sometimes some light breath and the spark of hope flies up from the ashes. What? Another doctor had come? The whole house around the sick man was thrilled. Let us try him, too!

He, too, was a surgeon. He had come from Moreas and his name was Kouzounopoulos. He appeared rather cloudy. He had come to look after some of his own affairs and was in a hurry. It was not to his interest to stay for one patient only. To see him just once

could come to no good. He would have to make a special job of it and to put him through a regular cure. Months had to pass, time and patience were needed. Do they have enough coin to pay him? If they had, all would be well, otherwise he could say nothing more.

Metros' mother and inseparable friends made their decision. They put together what they had and what they had not, sold here and borrowed there, took out their savings, and started contributions. All the village folks were generous for unfortunate Metros and so they said to Kouzounopoulos:

"We will give you five hundred drachmas. But you'll have to cure him first. We will trust the amount to another's hands. You will receive it from our priest Thymios."

"All right," he said, and took his throne in the sick man's home.

He started giving his patient all kinds of mixtures to drink and pestered his leg with cupping glasses and plasters and ointments. The sores broke and the pus ran, and the wound spread while he filled it with lint and changed it every day and cut it and squeezed it every dawn. For fifty days he was abusing the suffering man in this manner and for fifty days he ate and drank and slept in his house at the widow's expense. To all who asked him, he would say "the man is getting better and better." At the end he wanted about fifty drachmas.

"He is getting better and better!"

So he took the money and no one saw him again.

III

The sick man was getting worse and worse every day and every hour. At last a doctor appeared again in the house, not the quack from Lygaria nor the other from Moreas, but the real doctor of the Sea Village, the man who had treated him first. Again they fell at his feet. When the doctor saw his patient, seven or eight months since he had left him, he took so much pity on him that he forgot to be angry and to scold in his usual way. He was almost ready to cry but no tears would come out of his eyes.

"Still in bed?" he asked. "You must have done something to it; you would never never listen to me, hard heads! Hadn't I told you not to move your leg?"

He looked at the leg, looked at it again, and when he saw him speechless and worn out, he said a few more words.

"Well, you will be all right, you will be cured."

But to his mother and to the other women who were taking care of him, he said in plain hard words:

"Impossible to cure him. Those charlatans you brought in have killed the man. The nerves are cut and knotted. Gangrene has set in and has gone very deep. He cannot be saved unless he loses his leg. Take

him to Athens to a surgeon as soon as you can before it is too late."

Three days and three nights the widow of Demos, her two brothers, the touring tradesman and the blacksmith, Markos Kaninias, Yannakos Tarnanamas and Taria Terela, Father Thymios, the schoolmaster and the mayor were trying to make him agree to it. For three days and three nights he listened to every word and always gave the same answer, the same and unchanged:

"Better death than walking on a single leg."

The truth was that the mayor and schoolmaster, Taria Tarela, Yannakos Tarnanamas and Markos Kaninias, touring tradesman and blacksmith, even the widow of Demos, despaired about him. They had no faith in man's art. It was his fate, they said, and they were ready to abide by God's will. They did not want to annoy him too much, nor try to deceive him, nor attempt to take him to Athens by force. After all, let us not hide the truth, they all shuddered most at the thought of Metros with one leg. What difference did it make whether he was dead or crippled for life? They could not very well distinguish the one evil from the other.

As for the widow of Demos, for months now she had few words and much thought. One idea had gradually grown and spread in her until it flooded her mind. Her child had been bewitched. His sickness was no God-sent sickness, his trouble was the work of man. "This

is no chance," she thought, "but witchcraft, hell's work."

Morfo's mother, whose name was Garoufalia, could tell fortunes from the cards and could conjure the air-spirits. She must have cast the evil eye on the boy. She wanted to make him mad for her own daughter and when she saw her victim escape from her hand, she must have decided to put him out of the way. Argyro must be right about what she had told her once. One evening this woman Argyro, while she was returning home from the village fountain with her barrel of water, saw two other women half-covered in front of the widow's house. In the light of the moon she had seen the taller one threaten with her hand stretched towards the house and had heard the other, the short one, cry with a shrill voice: "I have you now!" Argyro recognized them as Garoufalia and Morfo.

The wife of Lampros, too, had told her so, and the wife of Doroyannis, and the daughter of Karasebdas, and Marigo, the divorced woman. The whole village was full with the din of it; it was no more a secret. Garoufalia had taken it on her to put Metros out of the way with her witchcraft so that he might not see a better day. Another rumor had it that Garoufalia had gone out towards Arta and met some Turkish women who gave her some signs. Then that sow, Morfo, since the day of Metros' betrothal at Melissi, had written his name among the dead and had masses celebrated on him

as a dead man, and had all the ceremonies of the dead practiced on him; the ceremony of the third day after death, and of the ninth, and of the fortieth, and of the third month, and of the sixth month, and of the first year. Her mother's daughter! These charms certainly never fail. No man escapes if they are practiced on him. Oh, that Morfo, the filthy beast!

Once her mother had sent a wedding message to the widow of Demos, a message for Metros. But the widow had said to the woman messenger: "I have brought up my boy working at the loom and going through a widow's suffering, day after day, and year after year; and now that I begin to see some good from him, must I see him married so young, a boy of twenty-eight? And with whom? Morfo!"

Again Garoufalia had sent another messenger, but the widow answered again:

"I wash my hands; if he wants her, let him take her; but let me not see him in my house again!"

After a little while, Metros had exchanged rings with Phroso, the daughter of Sebdas.

So the widow of Demos had decided to drop all doctors and their medicines, and instead of hurrying to Athens with her child, she, one morning, left him in bed and set sail for Patras. She went to see an old witch who lived there and who was famous throughout the whole of Greece. She could prophesy about love and hate, about the world above and the world below, about

life and death. She could undo a charm and cure the evil eye. She was acquainted with the fairies and could speak with the spirits. The widow found her in the upper town in a little hut stooping over copper horseshoes, wolves' teeth, cards, bones, embalmed ravens, magic herbs, and countless other things. As soon as she saw the widow of Demos, she shook her white head covered with a scarf and said: "I know why you come; for your child. Have you brought any signs with you?"

The widow of Demos, who had come well advised, produced the signs from her son's hair.

"Good. Come tomorrow for the answer."

At dawn she went back and heard from the witch's mouth:

"Impossible to cure him. They have practiced a terrible charm on him. The hour that he fell and hurt himself,—just before he fell—twelve Armenian women were eating and making merry. He stepped on their table"—at this she showed her a lemon rind—"one of them, as she looked on him, envied him and so she pushed him, threw him down and broke him. The Armenian women look with evil eyes on him—God preserve us from such spirits—Your child has been charmed for a long time and his name has been written among the dead!"

She came back to the village bringing the old witch's herbs but not her words. Her son had been expecting

her like a swallow in March. Of doctors he would hear nothing, but he did believe in witchcraft. For the same reason, a little time afterwards, when they brought him another witch from Melissi, a Jewess, to see him, Metros, on his bed, received her just as a sailing captain would receive a favorite breeze. His eyes gleamed in his pale face and a smile, like a star in a stormy sky, sweetened his lips. No one else had seen him smile like that except his sweetheart Phroso, just once. The Jewess had come to Melissi from Yannena only within a few days. She had eloped with a man from Yannena who brought her to the village. There she was baptized and they were married. So she was a lover, a new convert, a new bride, and a witch at the same time! A brunette with a clear skin, nimble, shapely, sweet-spoken. Her eyes did not need any witchcraft. She bent over him and looked at him so softly and pitifully that Metros thought his torments had come to an end and that nothing was left now but that she would take him by the hand and tell him: "Get up and walk!" and then he would get up and walk. He had faith in witchcraft, and beauty was bewitching to him.

The Jewess asked for his right boot. She took it and threw something in it, something like mercury, and ordered them to place it out on the roof through the night.

"Whatever you hear tonight," she said, "you must not speak."

Then she turned to the others in the house:

"Just see how the boy suffers from the spell! The fairies have ruined the poor child."

She, too, ordered various herbs which should be boiled in wine for him to drink.

At night they went to sleep. It was still winter but the night was like a night in spring, with a sky full of stars. The widow alone kept awake for Metros. She always lay by his side and many nights she spent without lying down at all. But on that night, had they all the health and happiness in the world, neither mother nor son could have closed their eyes. They remembered the words of the Jewess: "Whatever you hear tonight you must not speak!"

Both were troubled with the same fear and warmed with the same hope. In the wide room, the shrine lamp was sending out its dim light and one could not see in the lighted space anything but the little shrine with its smoke-darkened Christ and silver-smoked St. Nicholas and, thrown aside in a corner, a fog-horn and an oar.

Metros turned his sleepless eyes from the shrine-lamp to the pictures and thence to the corner as if he was expecting something to come out even from the things he could see in the dark, something mysterious and unhoped for. In the dim light, the shadow that was projected from Christ's image and the silver gleam of St. Nicholas and the length of the oar and the shape of

the fog-horn were mingling with each other and taking fantastic shapes, and becoming weird shadows and forms which shook as if they were talking with each other. Strange creatures they seemed, which, if one could only uncover, would manifest themselves as fairies and fates and souls and who knows what else!

The poor man felt the beating of his heart and his mind was filled with stories of another world and tales of old times. Like a condemned man he was waiting to see whether they would behead him or give him grace. At midnight, while it seemed like balmy springtime and the sky was full of stars and everything was perfectly still, all of a sudden they heard a great racket breaking out on the tiles of the roof, like the falling of pebbles. It seemed as if people were stoning the house or as if heavy hail was descending on the roof from the sky. They heard whistling and murmuring voices. The floor shook, the windows moaned, the doors creaked, strange shrine lamps and sacred pictures, and light and shadows danced before the boy's eyes. His breathing stopped. He could not utter a word nor did he want to. He remembered the Jewess' warning and was afraid that the fairies might take his speech away. With the long staff which he kept by his side, he shook his mother to wake her so that she might not miss what was going on; and the mother, without speaking, tapped at the floor to show him that she was awake and understood. From that moment mother and son lay wait-

ing, motionless and speechless. The noise had ceased and stillness had come again; but they continued to hear whistling and falling stones and murmurs of voices until daybreak.

At daybreak the Jewess appeared again. They told her what had happened in the night. She looked for the boot which had been placed for the night on the tiles of the roof, and examined it from all sides; then she thought for a little while, smiled sweetly at Metros, and took the widow apart to tell her:

"Didn't I tell you? The boy is bewitched. It is impossible to cure him. If he had taken up witchcraft from the start and had not tangled himself up with doctors he would have been saved. This is the truth!"

IV

The less comfort they received from the witches the more they fastened their hopes on their witchcraft. The widow of Demos with her brothers, the touring tradesman and the blacksmith, made a great last plan. A sorcerer lived in Epaktos. He could read Solomon's Witchcraft Book. That was no mean thing. From that book he could learn how to cure the worst diseases. He could exorcise fiends, close them in wine-skins and bind them in clay jars because he had Solomon's seal, and could stamp them with it. He knew where the four-

leaf clover grew and with it he could make the spirits his subjects. So they sent Taria Terela to Epaktos with money, letters, tokens and a thousand prayers. The sorcerer would say the last word. They were sure of that. From nobody else could they hope anything.

Taria Terela started on a fishing boat for Epaktos. He arrived in the evening, and without stopping to take his breath or rest, without saying a word to anybody, asking and searching, he found his way to the sorcerer's house the same evening. The sorcerer proved to be a pale fellow in rags with long black beard. He spoke very low and never laughed. Taria Terela put a ten-drachma bill in his hand and said:

"To treat a sick man and to cure him."

The sorcerer asked for a sign, hairs from Metros' head, and answered immediately:

"Be here tomorrow morning at four, at salepi* time."

In the morning, at four, at salepi time, the sorcerer was speaking again to Metros' companion:

"Metros is the name of the sick man; he lives in the Village by the Sea; his house is opposite the church. His mother is a widow and they call her Demaina. . . ."

Taria Terela gazed and shuddered with astonishment. He had not told him anything nor had he spoken with anyone in Epaktos. Yet the sorcerer knew everything. He made the sign of the cross.

*A hot popular drink sold by peddlers in the streets very early in the morning. It is prepared on the spot.

The sorcerer then spoke faster and faster.

"Put on your mourning clothes from now on. It is more than impossible for him to improve. I assembled all the spirits and commanded all the fairies, and everyone said 'what is to be shall be! What is written shall not be unwritten!' If Fate has it on her paper, an axe cannot chop it off. Love charms have ruined him. Bad spirits have touched him. Brother, give him up."

The winter, too, went by. The snow on Mt. Zygos melted and only its peak was still seen wrapped in thin white jasmine. In Misocampos the almonds were blossoming and in the houses of the Village by the Sea in every little piazza and on every roof, in all kinds of pots and boxes the fragrant green of royal mint and spearmint and rosemary were seen and roses and pinks and narcissus and violets were blossoming. Even the poorest house was rich in fragrant plants; for the girls of the village, with their thick tresses of hair and their supple little bodies took particular pride at springtime in watering and ordering their flowers. Under the balconies and the eaves, in doors and windows and between the flower pots, the swallows were building their nests. How easily they found a place everywhere to nestle. The humbler their nest the richer and more carefree was the life of the little swallows. One might think they, too, felt so.

In the home of Metros Roumeliotes no flower blossomed this year. Two or three flower-pots stood on the

balcony, hot and dry as if a black man's foot had stepped on them. In the mind of the widow of Demos, flowers could not displace her cares. During the past winter the wind and the storms had blown down the flower pots adorning the front of the house from one end to the other, with the boards which were supporting them, and, together with them, the nests which were waiting for the return of the swallows. No one had thought about putting them up again; when spring came and the little birds returned, they did not stop at the house but fled from the place of ruin, beating their wings restlessly.

The days of the carnival had gone by and the Great Lent was now near its end. The Passion Week had come again. April, young and fresh, made life new and brought with it new strength for life's struggle. The soul felt new joys. New cares sprang up in one's mind. Like flowers, love blossomed. The open chapels were fragrant with incense, and the hearts were filled with the fragrance of hope. On such a season, the care-worn, too, feels some sweetness; the despairing man takes a new impulse; and even the dying man clings closer to life and tries to sell it at the highest possible price.

Metros could no longer be saved. His days were numbered. Doctors and drugs, witches and witchcraft, all in vain. Gangrene set in. The poison spread constantly in his blood. He lay speechless and motionless and only his eyes spoke, moving swiftly and gleaming with light

as if they were watching for Charon's coming to fight with him. The poor widow of Demos became unrecognizable with sleeplessness and grief, a complete ruin. Markos Kaninias, Yannakos Tarnanamas, and Taria Terela neither spoke nor moved from his side. On Good Thursday they brought Father Thymios with the Holy Sacrament.

Good Friday came without the black sky of other years. It was all azure and light. With the first ray of light that slipped through a crack down to Metros' bed, Metros shivered and called out with a loud voice:

"Mother, I want sunlight and air; open the window!"

The window was opened and the sun flooded the dark and gloomy house. Like a festival, light spread on the floor, on the walls, on everything. There was light all around the sick man and one might have thought light was the only healer, the only sorcerer. The morning breeze that came in hurriedly from the opened window stirred his long and uncombed hair. Through the same window, his eyes wandered straight towards the peaceful waters of the Sea Village, the same waters that change a thousand colors like a thousand dreams at every kiss of the sun from morning to dusk. Only August had not given them the mystic beauty that April gave them now, a beauty made up of all the breaths and longings of life.

At one end of the mole he caught sight of a small ship, his own ship, neglected there without sail or rig. As if the sun had lighted his mind deeper than his own house, he felt that his last hour had come, that Charon had drawn near and that he should deliver himself like a brave man. The sorcerer Sun charmed him and made him drunk with a strange new wine, a wine made up of life and of death.

"A looking glass, Mother; a looking glass!"

Suddenly the care for his appearance flamed in him; he wished to prepare his manhood for the journey to the world below. He fancied that he was getting ready to go to St. Elijah's festival on the slopes of Mt. Zygos. His mother, who had resigned herself to her misfortunes, hearing without feeling and feeling without thinking, brought him the looking glass. He took it and looked at himself; but not so much at himself as at a thousand memories and a thousand scenes from his childhood days to the present. Scenes and memories, long buried in his mind, now were remembered for the last time, and he saw them with his faded eyes rise up fluttering in the glass like little birds with swift wings. It seemed that this looking glass was like that magic one of the famous legend in which one could see all distant things of the past and all distant things of the future.

Then all of a sudden he saw nothing in the mirror but his very pale face and his worn-out body; and

with the unspeakable agony of tormented manhood he said:

"Ah! Beautiful youth that the earth will swallow!"

With the words "beautiful youth," he felt for the last time the desire of youth for beauty and looks, the care that clings to men even in Charon's clasp. So he began combing his hair, his curly, thick, long hair that seemed to have drawn all the freshness and strength of the body, and, for that reason, had grown so thick and long. He trimmed his moustache as if he were getting ready for another betrothal. When he had done dressing himself, as if a sudden light had come to his mind, he said to his mother:

"Now, my poor mother, for so long I had courage and thought I was not going to die. One favor I would ask of you. Let me hear you mourning for me."

"Never! My child, what words are these? Mourn for you? Have you come to this?" His mother stammered, beside herself.

"Ah! and again ah! Mourn for me, Mother, mourn!

'Youth turns to dust
And manhood turns to grass,
And bodies fair are earth to tread upon!'

Say this, Mother, wherever you go."

He was silent for a while, then he sat up suddenly and said:

"I don't want to die alone. Let me see people around me. Open the door, Mother, and let the people come in."

It must have been nearly noon. The Sea Village folks were just coming out of the church. Suddenly to the ears of the people who were leaving St. Nicholas' Church and of those who were just passing by—there was much going and coming in that hour—to the ears of all those people came a slow, hoarse, mournful sound, so mournful that it cut through one's heart, and made one's hair stand on end; a sound that seemed now like a wild beast's, now like a human being's; a sound that rose and fell and died away and again rose and shook the air; a sound that was something like speech, and groan, and dirge, and complaint, and weeping, and laughter, and curse and song, the song of a frightened, maddened, despairing soul. The people who passed by heard the sound, stopped, shuddered, listened eagerly, felt the meaning of it, shook their heads and said to one another:

"Mourning song! Who is dead?"

Someone pointed to the house of the widow of Demos and said:

"Don't you know? It is from Demaina's home the mourning song comes. Metros, the good boy, is dead!"

Metros dead! Metros that fine man who suffered a whole year's torments in bed. Metros who had been hit by envy and jealousy and who had been bound with

witchcraft, had now met an unjust death. The news fell like hail on the Village by the Sea. Every man who heard it sighed and wrung his hands; and the women pulled their cheeks as if they had not been expecting it for so many months. They could not reconcile themselves to it.

When a man like Metros dies, a whole life dies with him, a sun goes out! Something happened then that had never happened in the village before. Everyone who heard the news told it to the next man, and wherever they stood, and however they were, they all walked quickly towards Metros' home. Where had all that crowd come from? Women well dressed with their black scarfs; women in ordinary household clothes just as they were in their homes; men of all sorts, property owners and workmen of land and sea; children held by the hand and children hanging on their mother's breasts. All the church people came there, too. One might have thought Christ's Passion was going on in that house and the Holy Sepulchre was set there. Many were still holding flowers in their hands, the flowers from the Holy Sepulchre, and one might think they were going to lay them on the dead man's bed to make his last sleep fragrant with them and to purify his remains.

The house was seen with doors and windows wide open. The noonday sun was bathing it with light. If one had not known it, if one had not heard the sound

one might have thought not that Charon had come that way but that a great festival was taking place. No one could hold that crowd back. Those who had come first had now crossed the threshold, climbed the stairs and gone straight in, filling every place of the house. The rest were waiting outside; and more were coming still. More people came down the street and more people lined up in front of the house. Suddenly again those who had reached the house first looked out of the windows and came down panting, worn out, and pale, bringing other news: "He is not dead yet, not dead. He is in his last struggle. He demanded that they should mourn him alive. Did you hear that? Never before did such a thing happen!"

It was quite true. Those who came into the house were stunned. Instead of the dead man they were expecting to see and kiss, they looked on a man sitting on his bed with a determined face, eyes wide open, and ears listening eagerly. He seemed like a young horse impatient to run over the plains, like a man who was waiting for his armor to enter a battle. In another corner the widow of Demos sat huddled together and motionless with a body like a corpse, without life, without tears. All her life had turned into her voice, a voice that sounded not like a woman's—the voice of despair. She sang to a tune of her own that no one had heard before, and said:

"A handsome lad is struggling with his life;
A handsome lad is dying;
Let your green lamps and yellow tapers burn
To light him on his journey;
To light the handsome lad upon his path,
To the dark world beyond,
So step by step he climbs the path uphill,
And step by step descends."

Vasilo, an old relative of hers, could not stand it and spoke to her:

"My poor Demaina, the world has never seen such a thing, to lament for your child when he is alive!"

Instead of the mother, the son answered:

"Never mind, I want her to mourn for me now!"

Then, turning to his little newly-married cousin Lolo, who was kneeling near him and trying to hide her tears in her handkerchief, he said with a commanding look:

"Lolo, why don't you lament?"

The cousin answered immediately with the following dirge:

"The handsome lad met on his path a worm,
A worm who spoke and asked him:
'Silver, why take this path where you'll be lost?
Gold, why come you to dimness?
O Silver Bell, why do you come this way
Where you will lose your song?' "

So from the mother's lips the dirge was echoed on the lips of the other women, just as tears bring tears and laughter brings laughter, just as one taper lights another taper, and just as sometimes the high tide of the sea spreads over the village. Among the mourning women, others came with wreaths of flowers and fresh bouquets, while others were busy in the other rooms opening boxes and preparing the dead man's clothes while he was still breathing, and people kept constantly coming and going. In the midst of all, Yannakos Tarnananamas, Markos Kaninias, and Taria Terela, worn out by sleeplessness and broken down by suffering, were standing with eyes fixed on nothing, speaking no word. Across the street, the carpenter, with tearful eyes, was nailing together the boards of the coffin, and upstairs Vasilo and the wife of Gyftoyannes were unfolding the cloth which was to be used as a shroud. On a table they had placed a cap all covered with gold embroidery, the last gift of his sweetheart to her hapless love who was leaving her forever. With that cap he was to lie in the coffin.

At noon the fight with Charon began and the struggle lasted the whole afternoon. The young man groaned deeply and shook like a land overtaken by a fiendish earthquake. During the struggle, like last sparks of life's candle, these words came out at long intervals:

"Ah, what a fate! . . . You're wearing white kilts. . . . Go slow. . . . Don't step on my feet. . . .

Bah! What a world this! . . . Come! Come. . . . Mother. . . . Don't choke me. . . . Room! Give me room! . . . I want air! . . . Sweet life. . . . Don't hide the sun from me. . . . Give it up!"

With these last words, he surrendered to Death. He died before the eyes of the people, in the embrace of the whole village, like a poplar cut down by the woodcutter after a long struggle in the open before the eyes of the entire forest, standing by helpless. On the same instant a murmur went up from that human forest, spreading from the deathbed to the street, a murmur born of deep sorrow and relief:

"What a pity for such a man to die so untimely! Glory be to thee, O Lord, for bringing him to rest!"

At the same time, far away at the edge of the sea one could see from the dead man's house the sun setting all in flames. No breath stirred the calm of the waters by the shore. What sweetness was there in nature! Land and sea were still, so that they might not disturb the short-lived sleep of the eternal God or the eternal sleep of the short-lived man.

At the same time those who were in the wide room, taking care of the dead man with eyes still open, saw something strange. The old widow of Demos, who had been kneeling by her child's bed in an apathy of despair, without a tear and without a sound, suddenly sprang up and rushed through the crowd with an angry look, like a wild cat, with hair dishevelled, arms and

hands outstretched as if she meant to strangle someone.

In the very midst of the house a young girl had slipped like a snake through the crowd, unnoticed by anyone, and stood motionless and speechless with a perfectly calm face gazing fixedly toward the dead man's bed. Some mystic joy shone in her eyes and although she did not open her mouth a faint line seemed to mark it slightly—a line that seemed like a smile. She was not tall but her body stood erect; and her face looked more beautiful as it appeared under the black scarf that covered her head. The old woman rushed towards her. Murmurs again was heard.

"Bah! The filthy one! The shameless one!"

"Did you see her, the crazy Morfo?"

But before the old woman could seize her, Morfo had disappeared quickly like a bad dream and like a sweet temptation. The old woman stood alone trembling and threatening, with her hands in the air; and before she fell senseless on the floor, she cried out:

"Ah! you witch! You come even here, hangwoman! You who killed him! Where is a pistol to shoot her! Let it be! Better death for him than to be your husband!"

THE FRIGHTENED SOUL

By Thrasyvoulos Kastanakis

THE FRIGHTENED SOUL

You will hear something sadly pale, just as sadly pale as the woman who whispered to me these dreams beyond thought. I will tell you something which has nothing to do with my sweetheart, yet lies in the pure and fragrant embrace of love.

She was just ten years old, as homely in looks as she was young, the little maid-servant, Nicoletta. She had a frightened soul and that soul I will disclose as I saw it when sorrow held it and gave it its dark heat as she passed before me hurriedly, answering either the call of the cook or that of her mistress upstairs.

I always saw her, little and young, slip by me anxious to answer the stern call; and I cannot forget the swift shadow that her childish body dragged behind it, a body that seemed ready to become shorter and thinner every time she was scolded. Her hair, reaching to her waist, was bound in a braid which waved restlessly as she ran. Nor can I forget the inevitable white bow which was tightly bound on the blonde braid's tip, sitting on her back like a dying butterfly weary of flying any farther.

Very seldom could you see a faint smile on the lips

of the little girl. Her face was of a very dark complexion and looked mouldy because of the scars that covered it. Her eyebrows were straight and low, joining each other without curving into an arch. Her eyes were small and round, her lips, in her large mouth, were very thin as if drawn with a sharp pointed pencil.

The first time my eyes fell on her she was pouring wine for me at my country house. The dim light of the smoky lamp from the table lighted her and made me believe that some magician had on the hour of her birth ordained sorrow her life's burden.

Ever since that moment she was for me a living anguish, bound forever in her bonds of sadness by the command of a secret fate.

Her eyes would always look at you stealthily. They seemed afraid lest they might light on some evil thing, but even as they flitted hastily over you they showed a deep pressing insistence for inquiry which chilled you. She would look at you with a curiosity mingled with fear; but the moment you tried to look back at her, she would with quick alertness turn her eyes away towards the table or the floor while she would stoop with the instinct of a little housewife to pick up some neglected crumb.

Her face was marked with the wrinkles of weeping. When she passed you she would walk on tip-toe making her step as light as that of a mouse that comes out in the night, afraid to be heard by you or to attract your

eyes toward her. She was terrified whenever anyone looked at her. She would lower her eyes till they were almost shut and a veil of pallor spread over her face down to her thin lips.

When these lips smiled they were like a garland of thorns in miniature. Her laugh, a wave of sound that whirled and slipped past the garlanded curb, reminded me of worn-out chords which are kept hidden in the hollows of the heart to scatter abroad the sound of pain mingled with the music of despair. It was an ugly laugh that would make others take it for the sound of running water filling a pitcher, but to me it brought back the memory of a song that an old sweetheart had sung to me in the old days, filled with the cold shudder of her agony. It was a laugh that could never be heard except in the numbness of silence and in the darkness of night blurred by the dim light of the smoky lamp.

In a corner behind an old ancestral chest, hiding the relics of forgotten festivals, she had her shrine. Under cover of a broad sleepy sofa set under the rich images of the saints, she would go alone, and with the piety of loneliness, she would hold there Holy Mass for her frightened soul. The candle flickering before the saints would answer her prayers with the pale whispers of its sparks that sputtered as an echo of her words, and Nicoletta would hold her weak breath to hear them in the solemn silence of the night.

One such moment, when the room seemed leadened

with the breath of sorrow, I went near her with the burden of an emotion I felt for the first time, and holding her head with my hands I looked into her eyes, shining with tears. I shall never forget the wild expression of her terror. A green pallor spread over her face, darkening the color of her scars, and her teeth gnashed in strange horror as if a row of glass flowers were cracking.

I had never seen her in such a terror of despair when she was running away from the angry cook. I had never seen her look so when, escaping someone's punishment, she rushed quickly, like a mouse chased by a cat, to hide behind the discreet old chest or behind the sleepy sofa in the same corner where she held holy mass for her frightened soul. I believed for a moment that I had before me the naked skeleton of hopeless fright; and she stared so that I closed my eyes humbly and went away with trembling knees, feeling the pursuit of her eyes that followed me like a flaming punishment for some secret sin.

On the next day I discovered some other sinner, too, pursued by the same eyes. But they never felt their flaming punishment, and I pitied them for their callousness. I was sitting at meal with my friend Agesilaos and his wife, Thecla, who were living in my house at the time, about a wooden table outside the door of my house which faced the sea-shore. I had a bad headache and without saying a word I raised the fork to my mouth

mechanically with my thoughts merged in vague revery. Suddenly a restrained laugh made me look towards them although it was a look of cold indifference. But as I turned I saw something horrible, a martyr's torture which in spite of its benumbing tragedy was never felt by the friendly couple.

Thecla, her pretty face red with pretended anger, was scolding Nicoletta just for fun, a play which was her favorite distraction. She was accusing the little girl of having broken the great mirror of the drawing room which she knew very well that the cook had broken by accident. Agesilaos was laughing to himself and trying to hide his enjoyment so that the little girl might not suspect that they were teasing her, and regain her courage. I looked at them only for a moment with disgust and then I turned my eyes full of reverence and inexpressible sympathy towards the poor child. It was sympathy which I had never felt before and I have never found a tear to equal its warmth.

I cannot say that this time a green pallor made the dark scars of her lowered face appear darker. It was rather the dark color of those scars that spread over her emaciated features. Her whole face seemed covered with it. She had her eyes fixed on the sand immovably and so I could not see their tearful gleam. Her body which, worn with sickness, was casting a thin shadow on the beach, trembled and as the trembling spread over it I felt the depth of its waves in my own heart. She held

her hands pressed tight against her breast and with sad nervousness was tearing with her fingernails her half-worn apron.

The scene was reaching its climax. Agesilaos, managing to hide his laughter, Thecla raised her voice more angrily, and the little girl, who had not said a word during all this martyrdom, at last spoke with a voice of complaint that trembled as her lips trembled: "I haven't broken anything, madam. If I had done it, madam, I would hide behind the sofa—I would hide, madam!" These words had a special meaning for her; they were a confession of the most sacred secret of her soul which tore the heart from which it came; for immediately her eyes filled with tears and she began crying as she covered her face with her apron.

"Come, come, whining thing. Go in and see what you have done with your new apron." Thecla dismissed her in a somewhat milder tone.

Oh, I wish I had that apron to kneel before it every night and worship the tatters of sorrow left on the half-worn cloth by her finger-nails. But she walked towards the house with head bent low and I saw her disappear into the darkness across the door while my ears were still choked by the trembling of her sobs.

The others said something meant for a joke and burst into laughter. I didn't care to listen to them and I let my eyes be filled with the red revelry of light in the midst of the blurred gold dance of the sunbeams,

a drunken dance accompanied by the song breaking from the innumerable mouths of the infinite sands.

The day had dawned some time ago and the sea spreading before my window far and wide seemed to be trying in calm composure the foam-born airs of her songs while the kisses of the sun were beginning to glide softly, like sleepy snakes, on its surface. But with the awakening of the day I felt a sweet weakness like the honey of vague swarms of pleasure-bees, hold me slave to the softness of my bed. My eyes would now mirror the glitter of the sea and now the shadow of love in the light of my room. Then they would caress carelessly the countless spots reflected from the gold petals of the sea on the walls and the dreams of cobwebs that spread over the sleeping corners. A lonely glass vase, held high in the green embrace of the wall to no purpose and without a flower to adorn it, made an effort to smile with the reflected sunshine which came fleetingly now and then to fill its dry bosom.

On the lapel of my coat which lay on a chair there were a few jasmines of crushed whiteness, complaining with their faint fragrance for the selfishness of the flower worshipper. The stray little flowers on the verge of death sent forth their fragrance mastering proudly their unspoken complaint and scenting with the last breath of their softly dying life the room where bare joy revelled, maddened with the beauty of full light.

Slowly, like the sweet nectar which in the shadow

of vagueness make you believe that you hold in your hands the happiness of drunken dreams, a numbness began to bind me with the charm of black-fringed eyes when suddenly a whisper, like a dirge, shook my thought. It was something infinitely sadder than the complaint of the jasmines, something reminding you of the despair of things that never come to blossom.

At first I thought I was asleep and that the dirge was a dream. Soon I realized with a creeping terror that just outside my door the frightened soul was crying. It was her own way of crying, a whisper choked by the trembling of her sobs. Lifted with the wings of terror and thinking of nothing but of the tears of the little girl, I found myself facing her before I knew that I had left my bed. I was holding the door ajar and with my eyes wide open I was taking in the picture of that soul crouching under the shroud of fright, a picture of the despair of things that never come to blossom.

There she stood before me like a dream of tears with eyes cast down. About her waist was bound that apron torn by her finger-nails moved by the countless tremors of sorrow. Her cheeks showed no other color but the bad blackness of her scars. Her lips, which, when she laughed, seemed like a garland of thorns, were covered with red foam like a shadow dipped in rose color or like the blood of crimson flowers without scent. Vaguely I could see at moments that her lips were a well of strange trembling which though clinging fast to the

flesh had no relation with it. On her unkempt hair which she had just wetted before combing it the white butterfly of her bow seemed still more drooping than before.

We were alone. I, a stunned reveller at sorrow's banquet, she the rich cup-bearer.

The candle before the saints dazed by the bold entrance of day held timidly its weary flicker within its rim. Near it a few everlastings were trying to forget their death in the dreams of sleep; and the curtains with their aged transparency were trying to remember their youth and the first golden kiss that the fondling sun had given them. Everything seemed to be plunged in thought and in the midst of thoughtful silence, the crying of the frightened soul was heard, a dance of whispers led by the trembling of her sobs.

The white butterfly perched on her unkempt hair which she had just wetted before combing, seemed to signify with its drooping weariness the praise of something born of scorned sorrow.

Without looking at me and with eyes cast down the little girl with the frightened soul opened her lips and with a voice soft and clear in spite of the trembling of her sobs spoke her complaint.

"The lady beat me . . . beat me hard, first time so hard . . . because I wouldn't clean the dog of his ticks. . . ."

At last Nicoletta, the frightened girl had spoken words

which if they had been kept unspoken would have increased her pain.

"The lady beat me . . . beat me hard . . . because I wouldn't clean the dog of his ticks." Her soft, clear voice impressed these words on my memory and they seemed to sound louder in my ears mingled with her plaintive whispers.

I pictured her before me as she was beaten by her mistress' hands of rose and ivory color; and I pictured her as she was writhing with her worn apron under Thecla's satin sleeves. I saw the unfortunate child of sorrow feeling the torturing barbarous sting of physical pain and a creeping shiver filled my eyes with tears. I came near her, overflowing with sympathy, and with infinite tenderness I held her head in my hands, wishing in this manner to pour into her frightened soul a few drops from the endless ocean of my love.

As my hands touched her I felt again the fever of her fright, her incurable illness, passing like a swift stream through my fingers into every part of my body. It spread like fatal numbness. I was so confused with my emotion that I did not know whether I was to faint caressing her or she would sink under the acute fever of her crying.

Early next morning I bade good-bye to my friends and left for the city, without mentioning to them the name of Nicoletta.

* * * * *

Several months afterwards, which seemed a long while after my first visit, I went back to my country house on a winter evening. At supper I saw Nicoletta again in the dim light of the same smoky lamp set on the same table and in the same hour of the night as before. But she looked very different and I could scarcely recognize her without the help of those scars that had remained still unchanged.

Her body had now grown up and showed the curved lines of health. Joy reigned on her face and a quenchless smile nestled on the corners of the same lips that held mystic mass for her soul under the rich shrine of images. She wore a new apron, white with a broad lace for hemming. I wondered what had become of the old one when I noticed another change. A bow of dark green was now binding her well-combed hair. When Nicoletta walked this bow looked like a butterfly passing dreamingly through the light breath of languishing fragrance.

A smiling face with the rich lines of health on her body! A great miracle, surely. I looked at her with amazement and tried in vain to guess the cause of this change. As I continued to be absorbed in deep thought, she pushed my cup nearer me and spoke with a voice that sounded like a song of joy:

"Here is a little wine, sir. Let me see if you like it."

I don't know what seized me. Something like the

mad feeling of despairing sorrow seemed to crush me. Half choked with a sob I whispered to her unwillingly and slowly, as she was filling my large cup: "Do you remember when she beat you because you wouldn't clean the dog of his ticks?"

I would have said more. I would have spoken words that would be like endless songs but I felt my power fail in the helpless effort. The little girl paid more attention to the flowing wine than to my words, and when she had filled my cup she spoke with the overflowing love of a child. "Drink it and see if you don't like it. *My* father brought it from home yesterday."

Something died within me then and the incense of its death spread through my whole being. The sound of the flowing wine reminded me of her crying which was still dinning in my ears. It was mingled with the songs of the wind expiring on the cold face of the snow and with the sputtering sparks of the candle weary of burning; and in these mingled sounds I could hear a dirge lamenting for the passing of sorrow and for something that had snapped within me and was now dying. I bent over my glass to avoid the joyful face that did not know how to remember.

Later, with the heat of the wine, I came to believe something strange and beyond belief. I believed that from the midst of my dreams of sorrow I had looked upon that little girl as she had never really been; and that through the burden of these dreams I had created

a child of sorrow living within me while I imagined her living beside me. With a broken heart, weary and hollow, I realized now that my own creation had nothing in common with the real one except those scars which marred the faces of both, scars that knew no feeling.

SHE THAT WAS HOMESICK

A. Papadiamanty

SHE THAT WAS HOMESICK

THE waning moon had just risen above the summit of the hill, and *she,* all in white, after listening to many sighs and impassioned songs of the youth, cried:

"Oh! if I only had a boat. Then we could go *over there.*" She pointed far over the harbor.

Perhaps Mathios did not notice that the end of her wish had changed from the singular to the plural. Impulsively he answered:

"I could push this rowboat into the water. What do you say? Shall we try it?"

He, too, changed from the singular to the plural, and without further discussion, as if he were merely testing the strength of his muscles, he began to push the little boat.

The little waves of the sea, lightly moved by the breeze, were rhythmically falling upon the sand and forever swallowed up by it—never tiring of the monotonous game, as the sand itself never had enough of the salty beverage. The young woman was standing on the terrace of the house which her fifty-three-year-old husband had rented for her. It was built so close to the water that it was in or out of it, according to whether

the south wind swelled the high tide, or the north wind swept out the low. The little boat was partly on land and partly in the sea, its prow deep in the sand, its stern bobbing up and down on the waves.

It was a light, coquettish little boat. She belonged to a schooner of the island, lying loaded in the bay. For three nights her captain had been enjoying his rest with his wife and children. His sailors, all from this island, were going the rounds of the saloons, making up in three nights for the enforced temperance of the past months. The cabin boy, who was from another part of Greece, had been left alone as guardian of the schooner and her cargo, with only the ship's dog for companion. He was eighteen years old, a tall boy, possessing all a sailor's cravings, if not his pay, and he had rowed ashore in this boat, to seek what consolation he could in a nearby saloon.

He had left the boat half drawn up, her prow deep in the sand, her stern rocking on the waves, and her two oars in place. They were light oars that a child would have handled with joy, while he admired his own strength, multiplied by the gliding smoothness of the waves—a gliding smoothness which yielded like the weakness of a mother to the tears and entreaties of a petted child, and took it hither and yon at will—oars which led the little rowboat over the sea, as the two wings of the white-breasted seagull, flitting over the waves, carry him to his home by the sea-bathed rock.

Mathios leaned his two hands on the prow, steadied himself on his legs, and pushed with all his strength. The little felouka slid into the sea with a splash. She almost escaped from his grasp, since he had forgotten to hold on to the painter, the rope attached to the prow. Instantly Mathios threw his light sandals from his feet, and without taking time to roll up his trousers, sprang into the sea up to his knees, caught the little boat, and drew it to a small nearby mole.

Meanwhile *She* disappeared from the terrace only to reappear a minute later, her white dress shimmering in the moonlight. Joy and fear mingled in the breast of the youth at the sight. He was acting almost unconsciously. He had not hoped that she would really dare to come. And she, not caring to express her inner thoughts, said aloud:

"Let's take a turn in the harbor, in the beautiful moonlight;" then she added, "just to see how it feels to get on board—to go beyond."

She always said "beyond" when she meant her birthplace. Behind the first green hill, above which the moon had risen—a hill, dark in the night, now grayish under the light of the moon—a tall white mountain raised its head, which sometimes was covered with snow, sometimes was bare and rocky. Up there was her country, the place of her birth. She sighed for it as if a whole ocean rolled between her and it, and not twelve miles. In the daytime the little green hill could not even hide the tall

brow of the white mountain. She longed for it as if she had not seen it for years, while it was only a few weeks since her husband had brought her to this neighboring island.

She laid her soft white hand on the shoulder of the youth, who shivered at her touch, and stepped into the little boat. He followed, and taking one oar, awkwardly strove to push off. Instead of pushing the mole, he plunged the oar into the water alongside. The boat tilted and struck a stone.

"Please don't let us injure another man's boat," she cried. The incident made her think more seriously of her action, and she added: "I wonder if they will not miss the boat. Perhaps they will need it. Whose is it? Do you know?"

Embarrassed, the young man replied: "Since we are only going for a short turn in the harbor, it doesn't matter whose it is. I don't believe they will need it so soon, anyway."

He took the oars and began to row. She, seated in the stern, was bathed in the full light of the pale moon, which sketched her delicate features as if in silver. Timidly he gazed at her. He was no sailor, but he knew how to row, having been brought up by the sea. He had come back in the middle of the year from the capital of the province, where he had been studying in the high school, because he had refused to accept the

punishment imposed upon him for having disputed with one of the professors whom he considered more than ordinarily stupid. He was barely eighteen, but looked a year or two older, owing to the thick hair beginning to grow upon his lips and cheeks.

After seating herself, the young woman reverted to her last remark, and added cheerfully:

"The owner will be looking for his boat, and Uncle Monachaki will be looking for his Lalio."

The youth smiled. Uncle Monachaki was her husband's name; Lalio, her own.

At that moment over the water a dog barked loudly. It was the dog of the loaded schooner to which the little felouka belonged. He rushed to the very tip of the prow. At first he wagged his tail and yelped because he recognized the boat. When she came nearer, and he did not see among the passengers either the cabin boy or any of the crew, he began to bark and growl furiously.

The young student rowed away from the schooner, which made the dog bark more furiously than ever.

"What ails him?" Lalio asked anxiously.

"Evidently he has recognized the boat."

"Does it belong to the schooner?"

"It would seem so."

The youth expressed this possibility with sorrow, seeing in it the necessity for shortening their dream-like

expedition. Fortunately Lalio, like a naughty child who takes intense delight in doing what she is forbidden, clapped her hands and cried:

"I am delighted. Let the dog bark for his boat—and let them look for me!"

Encouraged, the youth asked: "Where was Uncle Monachaki when you left the house?"

"In the coffee-house, as usual. All his time is spent there. He can scarcely unglue himself by midnight—always leaving me alone!"

She seemed ready to weep, and controlled herself with effort.

The youth continued to row, and after a while they were not far from the east entrance of the harbor. Exactly opposite there lay the long island, over which the white mountain rose, sometimes covered with snow, at others in the naked grey of its rocks. When they drew near the shore of the promontory which formed one of the jaws of the harbor, the young woman fixed her eyes on the horizon, as if anxious to penetrate farther than the pale light of the moon would allow.

"Let me look a bit beyond, and then we can turn back," she said with a sigh.

The young man, encouraged, asked: "What is that song that you sometimes sing?"

"What song?"

"The song . . . that tells of the sails, of the rudder

. . . of the mountains beyond," the young man whispered.

"Ah!" and immediately, with a tender mezzo-soprano voice, and in a pathetic tone she began to hum:

"'When will you come and sail with me?
The mountains yonder I long to see.
I'll take the rudder as on we go,
And bid farewell to my grief and woe.'"

She repeated the song two or three times to an old tune.

"Now you are seeing the mountains beyond," Mathios said, "only instead of sails we have oars, and the rudder is missing."

Once more the young woman sighed.

"Is it time for us to turn back?" The words fell from the lips of the youth like withered flowers.

"Just a little bit farther," Lalio begged. "The shadows cast by those islands prevent me from seeing well beyond. I can only see Derphi."

"Derphi is there," said the young man, pointing toward the south.

Lalio, pointing to the east, corrected him. "We call Derphi the tall mountain of my birthplace."

Once more she hummed her song, changing one word.

"'When will you come and sail with me?
My own dear Derphi I long to see.
I'll take the rudder, as on we go,
And bid farewell to my grief and woe.'"

The tall young man drew a deep breath, like a sigh.

"Ah, I forget. Your poor shoulders must be lame with rowing," she cried. "Really, I am behaving like mad. Your poor little hands were not made for rowing, Mr. Mathios."

The young man protested. "No, no, I'm not tired. The oars are very light. Such oars could not possibly tire one."

Lalio insisted on taking one of them, and, bending a little forward, tried to loosen one of the oarlocks, to move it nearer her. The youth resisted, and her white hand touched his.

"You said that my hands were tender," Mathios said, gazing into her eyes.

"Very well, then, let's put up a sail, as it says in the song," Lalio said playfully.

"Where shall we find the sail?" he inquired, unconsciously looking at her white dress.

Lalio laughed, and leaned back again in the stern.

They had now reached the mouth of the harbor, and found themselves between two little islands and the precipitous sides of the promontory. The moon rose

higher in the firmament, dimming the stars that were timidly shining in the corners of the sky. The sea was ruffled by the light breeze, remnant of the strong wind of the morning. It was a warm May night, but the breeze became cooler as they approached the entrance of the harbor. Their two figures were silvered by the melancholy light of the moon, in whose semi-obscurity the details of the landscape were lost. The little boat was passing close to one of the small islands on which light and dark objects could be seen: rocks sparkling under the rays of the moon, grey bushes gently stirring under the breath of the night wind, caverns beaten by the rushing waves, where sea-birds must have their home, and whence came the agonized whirring of wild partridges, frightened by the sound of the oars and the approach of the little boat. Toward the northeast, on a slope of the mountain, lights trembled, where in the daytime appeared the tiny white houses of the little village high above the sea.

On a rock, full of caverns and crevices, jutting out from the island, the sea beat, splashing and crashing, and disturbing the harmony of the moonlit scene. It constituted an orchestra of its own, an orchestra that made more noise than did the waves in all the inlets and beaches, on all the shores and the other rocks on which they fell.

Presently Mathios raised the oars and rested them for a while in the oarlocks. He remained quiet, resembling

the white seabird which joyfully leans toward the wave, one wing up, the other down, immovable for a minute, before hastening to catch the swimming fish and raise it squirming into the air. The youth was under an indiscribable spell. Lalio, too, was under an unknown enchantment, and their eyes met.

"Shall we hoist a sail?" she asked.

Evidently she had never ceased to think of it, since he had first suggested it. She said it now simply and naturally, as if she were interpreting the thought of both.

"Let us," he answered, still in a trance. He did not know what he was saying: he did not ask with what they should hoist a sail.

Lalio saved him that trouble. She rose, bent gracefully, and with a quick movement divested herself of her white dress, and handed it to him.

"Now get the mast ready."

Surprised, happy, and spellbound the youth took one of the oars and stepped it through a hole in the forward seat; then he took the white dress, still warm from the young woman's touch, and attached it to the oar for a sail.

Lalio remained in her short white petticoat, beneath which her shapely, white-stockinged legs could be seen. The beauty of her neck was now partly covered by her red silk scarf, as shyly she sat, looking more than ever like a charming little girl.

The breeze had grown stronger, and the improvised sail held the wind well and carried the little boat swiftly along.

There was no longer a question of returning to the harbor. Why should they? It was evident now that they were sailing for the mountain beyond. Mathios was sitting on the other side of the stern, not very close to Lalio, his eyes on the sea, lest he should keep them too much on his fellow passenger and embarrass her.

At that moment a song of the Heptanesian poet came into his mind, a song that played a great part in all romantic love affairs of that time. "Awake, sweet love," it began. He recalled another line: "Only the pale moon," and then still another song recurred to him:

"Farewell, my deep ravines, where cooling waters dwell;
Sweet dawns and happy birds, forevermore farewell!"

He remembered all these songs, but had no wish to sing them. They seemed to him quite out of place. That which seemed most appropriate was the one beloved of Lalio—

"When will you come and sail with me?
The mountains yonder I long to see.
I'll take the rudder as on we go,
And bid farewell to my grief and woe."

He was sitting not very close to Lalio, too close, however, for him to be able easily to look at her, yet so far away that neither her breath nor the warmth of her body could reach him. So intensely did he wish to look at her that he became dizzy watching the sea.

He took off his short light coat and begged her to put it on so that she might not catch cold, because, as the night advanced, the mist from the mountains became thicker. She refused it, maintaining that so far from being cold she was quite warm.

Mathios did not insist. He began to think about her, about her life, and her fate, and whatever he knew of her. The young woman had only known his parents since the time of her short stay on the island. She was not in her first youth, although she still retained almost all her virginal freshness. Neither was she newly wed. She was twenty-five years old, and had been married for five years. She was Mr. Monachaki's second wife. He had been a widower, and after marrying off his daughter, one year older than Lalio, he had married her; and the girl's youth had seemed to make him twenty years younger. As long as he had stayed away from his native place—serving as an official wherever the government chose to send him—Lalio did not very much mind. She had remained near her parents, since she was unable to follow Mr. Monachaki all over Greece, where, to use his own words, he was thrown about like an old boot. The wind blowing about him was unsuited

to tender flowers, and if devastating hands had dared to transplant her, she would have withered in a single month. The pot was alabaster, the plant delicate, and the blossom exhaled an aroma not meant for vulgar nostrils.

After much wire-pulling Mr. Monachaki managed to have himself appointed permanently to the neighboring island. Then he pursuaded his father-in-law, who was of his own age, and whom he greatly respected, to send Lalio to him, so that they might live under the same roof. Weeping, the young woman embarked on a boat, to go to the island. She bade good-bye to her step-daughter, for whom she entertained a real sisterly feeling. The latter had just become a mother, and had ceased to fear the arrival of a step-brother.

Mr. Monachaki, on the happy day of the arrival of his young wife, gave a party to all his friends, to share in his rejoicing, but on the next day his doors were closed, and he was at home to no one. This was not strange, since he never was at home himself. He spent his time either at his office, or at the coffee-house, with his enormous pipe always alight, and reaching the full length of his baggy light-blue trousers. He was a lively man, constantly talking and laughing noisily. His cheeks were red—almost the shade of his tall fez which tilted over his left ear, its long shiny tassel resting on his shoulder.

Soon after her arrival, whenever Lalio was awake at

the midnight hour of her husband's return, she began to complain, and beg to be sent back to her native place. She maintained that she could not live away from her parents. Indeed, from the first day of her coming, her heart had ached, she could not eat, and her color began to fade.

Uncle Monachaki gave her sweetly to understand that it was not becoming to leave him so soon after her arrival. He proceeded to expound long theories showing that the wife should ever be by the side of her husband, arguing that otherwise the object of Christian marriage would be nullified. He explained that according to orthodox vows, marriage was the union of the wisdom of man and woman, and not necessarily for the propagation of the race, since if the latter were the sole object, divorce would be the natural outcome of a childless marriage. For the propagation of the race, physical union was enough, while religious and political marriage was quite another thing. To strengthen his position he quoted from the scriptures such sayings as, "This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," "Whom God had joined together, let no man put asunder," "Man is the head of the woman," and many others.

Lalio stifled her sobs in the palms of her hands and in her heavy tresses, and wiped away her tears with the long ends of her white tulle cap.

As a neighbor, the youth was aware of all this, and secretly had fallen in love with her. The grace of her

slender form was not lost in the loose garment she wore. Her lovely face was framed by her abundant and naturally wavy hair. Under her finely arched eyebrows, the light of her dark, deepset eyes burned steadfastly, and her red lips lent color to the pallor of her cheeks, which blushed under the smallest exertion and least emotion. The gentle light of her eyes had burned into the heart of the youth. He had fallen in love with her. Often coming out on her terrace, she would for an instant look at him dreamily and absent-mindedly. Then her gaze would travel to an object on the eastern horizon, to the mountain beyond. This evening, however, during the absence of her husband, as soon as the moon rose, she had come out on her terrace. She had seen Mathios standing below her, enjoying the sea breeze. Then, at random, and without thinking, she had made the astounding proposition which had led to this strange voyage.

The young woman now seemed in a mysterious existence, in a life of enchantment from which occasionally for a few minutes she emerged, only to relapse even deeper into her marvellous and wonderful dream.

It was already midnight, and since they were rudderless, now the current of the sea, now the breeze from the land, had impelled them little by little northward, opposite the twinkling lights of the high village, which at present appeared much nearer. They were also quite near to a solitary and rocky island, known as Aspronesi,

which was the prison of a few hares, thrown there by the villagers, and also served as a sanctuary for all gulls and other sea-birds. Here it became necessary for Mathios to unfasten their makeshift sail, and give her garment back to Lalio, who was quite cold, although she refused to admit it. After taking down their improvised sail, the youth took an oar and began to use it as a rudder, endeavoring to turn the prow of the boat toward the left, toward the most eastern point of the opposite shore, which was called Tracheli. He realized, however, that he was not succeeding, the current not being propitious, and he was forced once more to begin rowing.

The spirit of the night breezes which were blowing from the land, and that of the sea waves between the two islands were tonight on the side of Lalio; for no sooner were they a few boat-lengths from Aspronesi than they saw a large *scambavia,* a barge, appearing from the harbor, near the three islands to the southeast. She was gliding over the sea at great speed and heading for the promontory, Tracheli. Her six oars rhythmically dipped into the water, and she slipped over the surface of the waves, as a young mare gambols in the field, after she has managed to escape from the stable.

At sight of the *scambavia* Lalio was taken aback. The youth turned to see, and stopped rowing, uncertain what to do next.

"Quick! quick!" Lalio whispered, as if afraid that her voice might carry to the barge. "Row behind Aspronesi—*please!*"

Mathios quickly turned the prow of the boat as she desired. Fortunately they were in the shadow of the shore, which prevented the light of the moon from betraying them. They turned a jutting point of rock, and were hidden behind the little island.

"What do you think it is?" Lalio asked anxiously.

"Without doubt they are searching for us."

"How big their boat is!"

"Yes, it has many oars, and eats up the space."

"So, if we had been in front there, they would have caught us."

"They are making for Tracheli. In a few minutes they would have been upon us, had we gone there."

"We did well, then, to come here."

"We did not come, the current brought us."

"The good waves knew what they were about," Lalio said, as if she were giving forth that which she had seen in a dream. And she said it believing at that moment that mere inanimate objects had a mind under the direction and will of a god. Indeed, one could almost believe that the night nymph had actually pushed the little boat with its graceful cargo toward that side on purpose.

"What shall we do now?" asked Mathios, feeling unable to cope with the situation, without the assistance

of a kind nymph, and realizing why from the beginning of the world woman had been created.

"Now," said Lalio, speaking persuasively and wisely, as if she had all along foreseen this turn of affairs, "we will wait here for about half an hour, and unless they suspect our being here, and come for us, they will make for Tracheli. Then we can land over there at St. Nicholas. From there, in about half an hour, on foot, we can make Platana, the high village. From there, when God's daylight comes, we will walk for three hours, and that will bring us to my own big village. Oh! if only my foot could touch its holy soil! But if they suspect where we are, and come here, well, we shall have to make for your island, and reach Kephala as quickly as we can. There we shall leave the boat on the sand, and return home on foot. 'Where were you, Lalio?' 'I went for a turn, Uncle Monachaki, and here I am again.' "

She laughed at her own pertness. Seeing the youth still anxious, she went on: "All I ask is for them not to catch us. I don't care what they will say. So long as we are innocent, let stupid people calumniate us if they like."

Mathios bent lovingly and kissed the tips of her fingers, thinking that he was innocent—yes, as innocent as many who, according to history, had been unjustly condemned to the slow death by fire.

She added sternly: "If I wanted a lover, the best way of having him would be to stay with Uncle Mona-

chaki. The proof that I don't want a lover is that I have started to go back to my own parents. They can not cover me up. Uncle Monachaki alone could do it."

A pain like a knife thrust cut through the heart of the youth. He imagined her in love with some one in her native land, and for his sake having undertaken this curious journey. If that were the case, what was his own position? What rôle was he playing? He was but the bridge over which two lovers stepped who were seeking each other.

Oh! what a flame burned inside him! He felt at that moment in the depths of his heart all the instincts of a tragic hero raging and storming. (Did the conscience of the writer permit it, this idyl could easily be turned into a tragedy. Imagine the dramatic pursuit of the two runaways by the *scambavia,* Mathios escaping through his miraculous rowing, only to learn at the last moment that she that was homesick had a lover there beyond. Thereupon the youth stabs her with a dagger, or, sinking the boat, drowns both her and himself. Then the barge, by the light of the waning moon, searching for the two bodies in the depth of the sea. What a miracle of romanticism! What tears of sentimentality!)

With a great effort Mathios mastered himself, and, looking straight at the young woman, asked simply:

"Was no one in love with you, there beyond, before you married Uncle Monachaki?"

"Of course—a great many!" Lalio answered play-

fully. "Only this was the trouble: girls without dowries are loved like the flowers. One inhales their perfume, and then lets them either wither, or fall to pieces. I didn't happen to have a big dowry, so no one loved me sufficiently to wish to marry me with pomp and ceremony, or to elope with me and marry me secretly, with only one priest, sure that my parents in the end would be willing to give up the dowry. So you see no one turned to ask for my hand, except Uncle Monachaki. Well, after all, it wasn't so bad," and she hummed the song—

"My parents gave me in marriage
Without asking what I thought."

"Then are you only running away from Uncle Monachaki?" the youth asked, referring to the last remark of her confession.

"I am not running away. I am returning home. I am going to find my parents. If Uncle Monachaki comes to me in my native land he is welcome. He knows very well that I am incapable of betraying him, but he also knows that I cannot live in exile."

The youth felt uneasy. He suspected that a woman ever deceives. He imagined himself a victim of her wiles. Abruptly he asked:

"Is it possible that some particular man has not singled you out—and that you do not care for him

more than for the others—before you were married—or afterwards?"

Lalio sighed deeply as she replied: "Oh, yes, to be frank with you, he who would have liked to marry me, and whom I should have liked to marry, was taken six years ago by the Black Sea. The sailboat was lost with all on board. But, for mercy's sake, why do you insist on questioning me?"

Meanwhile the barge, which the two runaways never stopped furtively watching, after continuing for some time toward the east, when it reached the end of the easterly island, stopped. Mathios attracted the attention of his companion to this.

"I know," she said.

"What?"

"You will see in a moment."

The young man looked at her inquiringly.

"Be patient: I will solve the riddle. Now you will see the barge turn toward Tracheli."

"How do you know? Are you a witch?"

"Yes, I am—I am a witch," she replied with conviction.

Mathios felt a vague fear at her sparkling eyes. At that very moment, the barge turned definitely to the east, and started more rapidly on her way.

Mathios gave a gasp of admiration.

"I will tell you what it is," Lalio went on. "I will

bet you ninety-five to a hundred that Uncle Monachaki is on the *scambavia.*"

"Well?"

"Those at the oars, to avoid the long trip, and because they have reasoned it out that way, must have urged him to hunt all around the little islands, thinking to come upon us in some of the inlets. Uncle Monachaki, who knows very well that I have no business with the islands, but that I have started for my native land, is certain that I have made for Tracheli, and if he can manage to catch up with me before I have set foot on Egnonda, the harbor of my island, he hopes to coax me to return with him to your island. For this reason he does not wish to lose time searching around the little islands, and so give me time to escape 'beyond.' So he has pursued those at the oars to make for Tracheli, though inwardly they are cursing."

"What can we do?"

"Well, when they get a little way off, we can go over there. Give me one of the oars."

Mathios did not refuse. Presently the barge was so far away that one could hardly discern her upon the immense horizon. She was a mere dark spot on the silvery surface of the sea.

Joyfully Lalio cried: "Now row for all we are worth."

The homesick bride was right: Mr. Monachaki was aboard the barge.

Half an hour after the two runaways had embarked, he had heard the disquieting news that his Lalio was no longer in his home. He was sitting in the coffee-house, engaged in an animated political discussion, smoking his enormous pipe, when a ten-year-old boy—barefooted, and dressed in a striped shirt and trousers, rushed in, crying:

"Uncle, your wife is gone!"

"Gone? Where?" asked the good man in surprise.

"I don't know."

"You don't know—then how did you hear about it?"

"Basil, the son of the widow of Markos, was on the beach, and saw her."

"And who is this Basil, son of the widow of Markos?"

The boy pointed toward the door. "That fellow outside."

The curiosity of Mr. Monachaki and of his companions was now thoroughly aroused, and they all looked toward the entrance. Another boy, eight years old, bare-footed and bare-headed, with one trouser leg rolled up to his knee, and his feet wet with salt water, stood outside, hiding half his face behind the door-post and keeping his body safely behind the wall, while he anxiously watched with his exposed eye to see what was going to happen in the coffee house.

"Hey, there! Was it you who saw my wife go away?" Mr. Monachaki shouted.

"I did, uncle," the child answered.

"Where did she go?"

"Don't know."

Mr. Monachaki was upset. He rose and made an angry movement with his hand, as if he meant to dash his pipe on the floor.

The first boy, who was standing only five paces from him, was frightened and started to run. He did not want to get a blow from that pipe. The older boy vanished behind the wall.

"Don't be afraid," said Mr. Monachaki. "If you are telling the truth, I won't touch you. Just come here and tell me what you know—I have a reason."

Sorrow, anger and shame dominated the old man.

"It was this way, uncle," the boy said, picking up courage again, but unwilling to be too distant from the door. "Basil saw the boat when your wife got into it with Kalioras' son, and started rowing away. Then he called me and showed me the boat. It was quite far, I couldn't see the man in it. We thought they would come back soon. Then we saw them row past the point of Pounta, out of the harbor. We wanted to see if they would come back but they never did."

"How long ago was that?"

"Two hours or more, I guess."

"Then why didn't you come to tell me sooner?"

"No, it could not have been so long," the boy stammered. "One hour—just one hour—no, less than an hour—a little while—just a little while ago."

Mr. Munachaki made an angry move to lay his pipe in the corner of the room. The boy ran.

Basil, the son of the widow of Markos, about three hundred paces ahead of the other boy, was running with the eagerness of a boy having some good, or some bad news to circulate. If it is good news, they run to get a tip from the interested person; if it is bad news, they run to enjoy watching the unfortunate person's embarrassment. He stopped, panting, under the piazza of the captain of the schooner, where he had seen the open door of a brightly lighted room, and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Uncle, your rowboat is gone!"

Basil had not had the courage to enter the coffee house to tell his news to Mr. Monachaki; but seeing that his chum had done this with impunity, and considering that the captain's heavy cane could not reach him from the piazza, he had plucked up courage to run ahead of his friend, to enjoy the pleasures of a news carrier.

Captain Kyriakos was still at the table nibbling at one thing or other, as a stimulant to another drink, in the expert manner of a sailor who has just come home and is eager to prolong and analyze this rare bit of happiness. He heard the voice and walked out on the piazza:

"What is that?"

"Your boat's gone!"

"Who has gone with it?"

"Mathios, son of Malamos."

"And who is Mathios, son of Malamos?"

"The son of the wife of Malamos Kalioras, I say."

"Where is he going with it?"

"Out of the harbor."

"Is he alone?"

"He is gone with a woman."

"With a woman?" Captain Kyriakos was surprised. "What woman?"

The boy remained silent and took preliminary precautions to hide under the piazza.

"Why didn't you bring me the news sooner?" shouted the captain.

But the boy disappeared around the corner and the captain could hear his steps on the pavement as he ran away at full speed.

"That devil of a cabin boy must have got drunk again somewhere and left that boat to shift for itself."

Captain Kyriakos reached this conclusion in monologue, and immediately sent men to look for the culprit. After much vain searching through the various wine shops of the market place, they found him, at last, in an out-of-the-way shop at the end of the town.

The captain asked two of his friends, who had been

with him at his table, to borrow a boat of some sort in order to row out to the schooner, and let down from its deck the gig, a large rowboat with six oars. He did not seem to care so much for the woman who had eloped or for the lucky young man who had gone with her, as he did for his new, neat and well-built *felouka.* He also asked them to mobilize two or three boatmen and to hasten in pursuit of the elopers.

Meanwhile, Mr. Monachaki had been informed who the owner of the stolen boat was, and presented himself with a sad countenance at the captain's home.

"Can you come aboard the barge yourself?" asked Captain Kyriakos, on becoming acquainted with the husband of the eloping wife—for, of course, everyone intepreted the event as a case of elopement.

To go with the *scambavia* was exactly what Mr. Monachaki had been wishing for. He was afraid to stay in the little town, a prey to his anxious thoughts; and it seemed to him that by taking part in the pursuit he would be able to lessen his agony. He had confidence in Lalio. She had said herself that she was incapable of betraying his honor. But who can tell? Who can fathom the mysteries of a woman's temper? He knew she was delicate, inclined to be a dreamer, and a prey to homesickness. But how could he make other people understand such things? Pity him who falls into a pit of water, however clean the water may be. Other people may help you out but they will not fail to ridicule you.

Still he was as sure of his Lalio as any man could be sure of his wife. From the time when he used to visit her father's house as an intimate friend of the family, he had known Lalio; he would take her on his lap, rock her and kiss her. She was three years old then and he was thirty. When she was five, he would bring her candies as presents without calculating on his part and without ever suspecting what was going to happen in the future. From the time when Lalio, still lisping, called him "Uncle Monachaki" to the time when she became his wife, and still continued to call him "Uncle Monachaki" he had studied her as a child, as a young lady, and as a woman; so he knew well that more than any other woman Lalio lived with her head and her nerves.

Half an hour passed before the two sailors whom Captain Kyriakos wanted could be persuaded to leave their houses. Another half hour was spent in finding a boat, boarding the schooner and letting down the gig into the sea. Another half hour passed before they could mobilize any boatmen or fishermen from the wharf. Their boats could not be considered for the pursuit because they were too heavy and had only two or, at the most, four oars. A lot of time had to be wasted before they could reach an understanding. At last six of them did board the *scambavia*. Mr. Monachaki was the seventh man, and he took his place at the rudder.

Rowing strenuously, they reached the open sea; but

then how could they find the *felouka?* The sea may chat like a woman, but can also be as stubborn as a woman in keeping a secret. If you could not detect any traces of alien kisses on the lips of a woman, so you could not detect traces of the elusive boat on the endless expanse of the blue sea.

"Who can tell," thought Mr. Monachaki. "Love beguiles and youth is easily deceived." How could he know whether she had not sinned already? He had told her once that she would be safe near him because an old husband can also be a father to a young wife; and she had answered that she would be safe near him even if she meant to do wrong. Both were right; Monachaki saw that now, when they were apart; and even if she were a thousand times innocent, the world would condemn her; but if she was near him she would always be honorable in the eyes of the world though she might be a thousand times guilty. Like the princess in the old legend, if she were to pass the ordeal of the bow, the arrow would hardly touch her finger tips.

The *felouka* was moving between the two islands on the open sea. The kindly spirit of the sea brought a helpful current to its keel, and a favorable breeze blew softly on its stern. Its cool breath gave strength to the arms and shoulders of the young man, and braced the soft muscles of the young woman. They rowed like expert oarsmen. The light oars did not seem to tire

them, and they had already reached the second half of their watery way.

The crew of the barge first caught sight of the *felouka* only when they approached the Neck Point.

"What's that?"

"The *felouka.*"

Mr. Monachaki turned his head to the left:

"Ah, that is it."

"Who knows? I don't believe it can be it," said one of the sailors, who wished to avoid the additional labor and annoyance of pursuing the distant boat.

"I am sure that's the boat," said another, whose curiosity made him intent upon seeing this sea drama to its end, and upon catching the boat with the eloping lovers.

"That *is* the boat," concluded Mr. Monachaki, "let us turn that way, boys. I'll steer to leeward."

"Where are they going, that way?"

"To St. Nicholas; you see they have taken the shortest way and we have been wearing out our shoulders all this time for nothing."

"Let us turn, boys," shouted Mr. Monachaki. "Quick! some of you back water, so that I may turn to leeward."

The six men at the oars had stopped rowing and the barge was going by its own momentum. But Mr. Monachaki was impatient over the time they had been wasting:

"Back water, boy, I say! Turn that way, to leeward."

But nobody paid any attention to him. A council was held in the middle of the open sea. Some were of the opinion that they should go on; others thought that they should turn northward towards the *felouka*. Finally the majority won, electrified by expectancy of the enjoyable scene they might witness.

They turned the prow to the left and resumed rowing. Their strength was renewed and refreshed. Only the barge was three times as far from the harbor, which was their goal, as the little boat; and though it was propelled by a crew three times the size of the other boat, it was five times as bulky and its displacement was three times as great.

Mathios immediately noticed the sudden turning of the barge.

"See," he cried, "they are after us."

"They may try to catch us now," Lalio shouted joyfully. "It seems to me they are farther away from us than we are from land."

"Much farther. But they have many oars."

"We have a lot of strength, too."

With these words she redoubled her efforts at the oar.

For a whole hour the contest continued along the coast, while the pale moon slowly sank in the west and from the farms that studded the valley and the hill-

sides, the chanticleers crowed their second call. It was the game of the terrible octopus with its long arms pursuing pilchard, or of the playful dolphin diving after needle fish. The *scambavia* moved with pompous monotony, like a strong hideous shark, while the oars creaked rhythmically in their forked iron tholepins at each stroke.

The *felouka* glided over the waves like a cork, with a ripple as light as the sound of a kiss, while with its playful oars it pushed behind it the waters which caressed it and escorted it, in front and behind, like a guard of honor preceding and following a royal chariot. One might think that invisible Tritons were carrying it upon the face of the waves so that it might not lose speed with its keel under water.

However, it was clear that the barge was gradually gaining. The race was long and arduous but the barge came nearer and nearer. At last the *felouka* approached the beach, and Mathios had the satisfaction of running his boat first on the shallow sands.

"May we ever have as good a trip as this!" Lalio shouted gaily. Then she rose, made the sign of the cross at the sight of the little chapel of St. Nicholas, gleaming in the moonlight, and sprang on the beach without wetting more than her heels. Mathios jumped after her and pulled up the *felouka*. The *scambavia* was now only twenty yards from the beach.

The young man was eager to accompany Lalio to the

village. He suspected that the crew of the barge would continue their chase on land, too, and somehow he felt happy for that very reason. Lalio's last confession about her lover who was drowned in the Black Sea was not a sufficient antidote for his misgivings. Evil forebodings disturbed him and he thought that a woman who had forgotten her drowned lover to marry an old man, was also capable of abandoning old age for a third one, who might live in her home village. But if they should be pursued on land, too, she would have to depend on his help; they would have to reach her village together and then—oh joy—their love would be consecrated by land and sea.

Suddenly the voice of Mr. Monachaki, standing up in the moonlight on the barge's stern, was heard shouting in the silence of the night:

"Lalio! Ho, Lalio!"

Lalio stood thoughtful for a moment with head down. Then she shouted back:

"Yes, Uncle Monachaki?"

"Do you want to see your parents, my sweetheart? That is quite right. Wait a moment. I will go with you. You might find it hard, my love, if you go alone."

"Just as you say, Uncle Monachaki," Lalio answered without any sign of embarassment.

The young man stood beside her, aghast, unable to understand her, and somewhat afraid for himself.

"You can go back with the barge, Mathios, my boy," said Lalio, with sincere emotion. "It is a pity that I am older than you. If Uncle Monachaki was dead, I might marry you."

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